

An illustration of two women at the top of the page. The woman on the left has reddish-brown hair, wears glasses, and is holding a mobile phone to her ear. The woman on the right has dark skin, her hair is in a red bun, and she is also holding a mobile phone to her ear. They are positioned behind a large, jagged hole in a red brick wall.

# RESEARCH across the WALLS

A Guide to Participatory  
Research Projects & Partnerships  
to Free Criminalized Survivors

Survived & Punished (January 2019)



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# Introduction

The vast majority of people in women's prisons, and many in men's prisons, are survivors of domestic, sexual, homophobic and transphobic violence as children and adults. For many survivors, experiences of policing, criminalization, and incarceration are deeply intertwined with gender-based violence. Yet very little research exists about criminalization of survivors.

The absence of information and conversation about the ways in which survivors of violence are criminalized contributes to the invisibility and normalization of violence against survivors enacted by police, ICE and Border Patrol, courts, prisons, and other criminalizing institutions including schools, child welfare and social services, and health care institutions. Further, these institutions actively avoid or block efforts to gather information about the connections between surviving domestic/sexual/homophobic/transphobic violence and being targeted for criminalization. This area of research has also not been a priority for major criminal justice research institutes; research efforts on criminalization rarely focus on criminalized people who identify as trans, women, and/or survivors of domestic/sexual violence.

Though there have been important studies and analyses led by feminist researchers inside and outside of academia (see Section 1 and the Bibliography in the appendices), the problem of the criminalization of survival is so complex and pervasive that it requires research at a much greater scale, including research conducted by or done in collaboration with currently and formerly incarcerated/criminalized people.

Community-based research can provide vital information for policy advocacy and defense campaigns focused on freeing and supporting criminalized survivors.

Research centered on survivors' experiences can challenge the isolation that criminalized survivors often feel by affirming that their experiences of violence are real and part of a systemic pattern that must be dismantled. Research led by, or conducted in collaboration with, currently and formerly incarcerated people is particularly crucial to these efforts. For example, data collected by incarcerated people in California women's prisons has been an invaluable (and often the only) source of information about how survivors experience criminalization, and reveals important details about the pathways between gender-based violence, criminalization, and incarceration. Participatory research that directly engages criminalized survivors helps gather the necessary information to make the case for needed change.

The urgency of research cannot be overstated. Though racial and gender violence is at the very heart of the criminal legal system, understanding the specific ways that criminalizing institutions target and ensnare survivors increases our capacity to organize for individual and collective freedom. Research can help guide organizers to determine which policies to challenge, identify strategic tactics to prioritize, and reveal crucial contexts of criminalization not yet on our radar.

With this research guide, we aim to equip more people with tools, resources, ideas, and models to pursue urgently needed community-based research projects. We hope this guide inspires more organizers, advocates, attorneys, scholars, and survivors -- especially those who are currently and formerly incarcerated -- to lead research projects that will contribute to a growing body of data and information to fight for the freedom and well-being of criminalized survivors - and of all people.

## Section One

# WHAT WE KNOW

## Existing Research & Data



While there is limited up-to-date research on the relationship between surviving sexual, domestic, homophobic and transphobic violence and being targeted by systems of criminalization, we have collected information that is currently available to provide context and background for this guide. It is important to note that, while our research questions are written so that future research will include the experiences of survivors of all genders, including trans and nonbinary people, the available research is overwhelmingly focused on cisgender women and girls and therefore cis-normative, erasing the experiences of trans and nonbinary people. Thus, the literature presented here does not fully capture the realities and histories of all criminalized survivors.

Most people in women's prisons and detention centers report having experienced some form of interpersonal violence during their lifetime, whether childhood sexual abuse or adulthood experiences of domestic or sexual violence.

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- Studies that document trauma histories of incarcerated women have found that between **40% and 93%** experienced intimate partner violence prior to incarceration (Gilfus, 2002; as cited in Kraft-Stolar et al., 2011).
  - **68-86%** of women who are incarcerated report surviving sexual violence in their lifetime (Browne, Miller and Maguin, 1999; Lynch, et al., 2013).
  - **75%** of the women incarcerated at the Bedford Hill Maximum Security Correctional Facility in New York reported that they had experienced physical intimate partner violence as an adult (Browne, Miller and Maguin, 1999).
  - A 2010 study of women in a California county jail found that **84%** of the women had experienced physical violence by a partner (Kelly, 2010).
  - A study published in 2014 found that **84%** of girls in juvenile detention had an experience of family violence, **41%** had experienced physical abuse, and 31% had experienced sexual abuse (Baglivio, et al., 2014, as cited in Sherman and Balck, 2015).

## Homicide

Studies have found that women convicted for homicide are likely to have killed someone who was known to them.

- One study in California found that 93% of women incarcerated for homicide of an intimate partner were abused by the person they killed; 67% women indicated the homicide resulted from an attempt to protect themselves or their children (Law 2014).
  - A study in New York State found that, of women who had killed someone close to them, 67% had been abused by the homicide victim (NY State Department of Correctional Services, 2007).
  - Another report states that 93% of women convicted for killing an intimate partner disclosed a history of domestic or sexual violence during adulthood (Kraft-Stolar et al., 2011).
- 

## Coercion

Numerous studies show that survivors of intimate partner violence are also often criminalized because they were forced or coerced into participating in illegal activities by their abusive partners. Incarcerated survivors describe participating in theft, robbery, using or selling drugs, the sex trades and other criminalized activities under duress, and either taking the blame for their abusive partner's illegal activities to protect themselves from threats of future violence, or being blamed by the judicial system for the actions of their abusive partner (see Moe, 2006; DeHart, 2008; Fuentes, 2013; and DeHart et al., 2014; cited in Dichter, 2015, Bierria and Lenz, 2019).

## Policing & Prosecution

Research suggests that police and prosecutorial policies and practices contribute significantly to criminalization of survivors, including young women of color facing violence in the home. (Ritchie 2017; OVW 2016; Sherman 2016)

- In 2000, a study of domestic-violence survivors under New York State's mandatory arrest policies found that survivors of domestic violence were arrested in 27 percent of cases reported through a domestic violence hotline. Eighty-five percent of survivors who were arrested had a prior documented record of being subjected to domestic violence, and 85% were injured during the incident that led to their arrest. A significant majority (66%) who were arrested along with their abusers (dual arrest) or arrested as a result of a complaint lodged by their abuser (retaliatory arrest) were Black or Latinx. Forty-three percent were living below the poverty line, and 19% were receiving public assistance at the time. (Haviland et al., 2001)
- Arrests of survivors are particularly common in police responses to incidents of violence involving two people perceived to be of the same gender or LGBTQ. According to a 2010 NCAVP report, incidents of "misarrest" of LGBTQ people increased 144 percent from 2008 to 2009. In 2015, misarrests of survivors increased to 31 percent, from the 17 percent reported in 2014. (NCAVP 2016)
- Studies have also found that survivors of violence are also more likely to be arrested if they were under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances at the time of police response, fought back against their abuse, were engaged or perceived to be engaged in sex work, or are transgender or gender nonconforming in appearance. Police officers will often use evidence of other offenses - often caused by or related to violence - found at the scene of a domestic violence call to criminalize survivors, including drugs, theft, immigration status, prostitution, child abuse & neglect. (Ritchie 2017)

## Victimization by Police or Prison

More data has been collected about people's experiences of sexual violence while incarcerated or during police interactions. For example, one decade-long study found that a law enforcement officer is charged with sexual misconduct every 5 days, and that motorists, crime victims and witnesses and young people are the most frequent targets. (Ritchie, 2017) Studies across the country have found that 20% to 59% of trans women report sexual harassment, assault or extortion by law enforcement officers (Ritchie, 2017). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 40% of incarcerated trans people reported that they had been sexually assaulted while incarcerated in US prisons (Beck, et al, 2013), and incarcerated children and people with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of sexual violence (Beck 2014, Beck et al, 2013). Also, between 1,016 and 2,573 complaints of sexual abuse at immigrant detention facilities between May 2014 — when PREA regulations were implemented — and July 2016, a number that is believed to be an underestimation (CIVIC, 2017).

In light of the very limited research in this field pointing to deeply disturbing systemic patterns, our ultimate goal is to improve our understanding of how many incarcerated people have been affected by domestic, sexual, homophobic and transphobic violence and/or have been criminalized as a result of surviving abuse. Please see the bibliography in the Appendices as a starting place for existing research. Additionally, we recommend exploring the following websites:

Survived & Punished	<a href="http://survivedandpunished.org">survivedandpunished.org</a> Includes statistics, fact sheets, research, news articles, testimonies, and multimedia resources
National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women	<a href="http://ncdbw.org/resources">ncdbw.org/resources</a> Includes publications, annotated links, amicus briefs, and webinars
Invisible No More	<a href="http://invisiblenomorebook.com">invisiblenomorebook.com</a> Includes statistics, citations, and a study guide on police violence related to domestic/sexual violence experienced before police encounters and enacted by police

## Section Two

# RESEARCH PROJECTS

## Working with Criminalized and Incarcerated Survivors

Criminalized survivors (especially those behind bars) are often under constant state control, and are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation in the name of research. Pursuing a research project in collaboration with criminalized survivors can be one way to remain engaged with, and accountable to, people who are providing information about their experiences.

Before going any further, review principles for building relationships with criminalized survivors in “Survived & Punished: Survivor Defense as Abolitionist Praxis,” a toolkit published by Love & Protect and Survived & Punished: (<http://www.survivedandpunished.org/sp-toolkit.html>). Be sure to read pp. 14-15 for essential tips for writing letters to incarcerated people.

### Key practices for ethical and productive community-based research with incarcerated people

#1

**Learn as much as possible in advance about the specific prison/jail/ICE detention site you plan to work with people in to anticipate risks.**

Balance the benefits of the research with the potential harm to participants. Most prisons make it difficult to speak privately with incarcerated people, and written surveys may be read by prison staff both as incoming mail and as completed surveys when returned by participants. In many facilities, participation in a research project of this nature may result in harassment or retaliation against participants. Therefore, it is crucial to know as much as possible about the current policies and practices in each facility.

Some groups might choose to approach the prison administration in advance to inquire about cooperation with the study if it is an administration that promotes itself as sympathetic to survivors of violence. There are some advantages to securing the administration’s cooperation and commitment to the study beforehand: for instance, the content of interviews conducted in person may be easier to keep confidential. However, participation still may result in consequences for participants.

Telephone calls and mail are usually monitored and recorded, so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if these methods are used. Mail sent into incarceration facilities may be searched and is often read by prison staff. Unless you can work cooperatively with a legal or other office that has privileged mail status (and even then), assume that any mail sent into a facility will be read by officers and any mail survivors send to you will be read before being placed in the mail. Similarly, if you are having phone calls with someone in prison, be aware that most phone calls may be monitored and recorded without the consent of the caller or the person in custody. Be aware that anything you say or write may be used against the person receiving your call or letter.

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**#2 Build relationships with incarcerated survivors before you create a participatory research plan.**

Incarcerated survivors can help you understand the culture of the particular jail, prison, or detention center, and anticipate the risks of retaliation for participation in research projects. Connect directly with survivors through letters or by partnering with grassroots groups who have established relationships with incarcerated survivors. As you build relationships, gather critical preliminary information to drive the research plan. For example, ask incarcerated survivors and their outside supporters about harassment and retaliation at the facility, if there is any existing support for incarcerated survivors, and what they would like to know about the experiences of criminalized survivors at the facility.

As you develop your research plan, we encourage you to co-create research tools with criminalized survivors, including those who are currently and formerly incarcerated. Unlike most academic research, activist research is usually participatory in nature, with participants (as opposed to research “subjects”) having a voice in the purpose of the research, the questions being answered, who has access to the information, and how the research is conducted. Participatory research is likely a better approach than is academic research. Depending on your ability to meaningfully connect with incarcerated survivors, the project may require relying on participants who are no longer in custody to develop the research process. See Section 4 to learn more about participatory action research.

Please see the case study in the next section to learn how Survived & Punished California developed their survey in collaboration with incarcerated survivors in California prisons.

### **#3 Be transparent to participants about the goals of your research and how you plan to use it.**

Explain whether and how you will work to keep the identities of incarcerated survivors confidential, but don't promise confidentiality or anonymity within the prison. Think through and be honest about any possible risks or disadvantages of participating, as well as the long-term potential benefits to incarcerated survivors.

Let incarcerated people know who will see the final report of the research and what you hope it will accomplish. If you can provide a stipend to participants, explain how you decided on the amount of the stipend, where the funds are coming from, the method you will use to provide it and when, and if anyone else is receiving payments or benefit from the study. If you are part of a community organization or academic institution, be clear about that affiliation.

Let participants know that they can skip any question they are not comfortable answering and that they can end an interview at any time if they don't want to continue, without forfeiting any stipend, and keep those promises. These are basic ethical principles for research.

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### **#4 Recognize and reduce risks of research with incarcerated survivors.**

If you haven't worked before with survivors of gender-based violence, it's important to educate yourself through trauma training or reading, with the goal of avoiding doing harm through the research process. If you are corresponding with or interviewing currently incarcerated survivors, be mindful of any language that may raise feelings associated with past trauma, anger, fear, or depression. The environment of prison or jail does not support survivors in working through those feelings in a healthy way, and if they express their feelings they may be subjected to punishment or ridicule by prison staff, and could even be placed in solitary confinement, which is horrifically damaging to human beings. If survivors have no support for dealing with triggers or recurring trauma, it may also exacerbate their interactions with prison officers and subject them to escalating abuse.

Express support without going into detail about their past. If you are doing one-to-one interviews, be sure to include a trigger warning as part of your consent protocol, and ask the survivor if they feel prepared and have supports in place to deal with feeling triggered or reliving traumatic situations. Keeping in mind the time limits for visits and phone calls, plan for time for a debrief period at the end of the interview with options like a cool-down exercise, meditation, or creating a self-care plan to reduce the likelihood that you will send someone back to their living unit in a condition of turmoil.

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## **#5 Be mindful of language.**

People-first language and approaches are especially important for survivors who are incarcerated. Do not use the terms “inmate”, “prisoner”, “convict”, “offender” or “ex-offender,” and do not assume that the participant committed the offense they were convicted of.

Set aside resources to produce your research materials in multiple languages to reach more survivors.

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## **#6 For academic or formal research, understand the administrative requirements.**

Research undertaken in partnership with an academic institution can sometimes receive a confidentiality agreement from corrections administrators that prevents prison staff from accessing research responses. However, if you are conducting academic or formal research with incarcerated survivors, you will likely require formal approval through an Institutional Review Board (IRB) of a government entity or an academic institution. The requirements for approval often involve making sure that (1) each participant gives informed consent for the research, (2) each participant understands the research and any potential risks of participating, and (3) that you have done everything you need to do to ensure confidentiality and reduce the possibility of any unintended harm. Securing IRB approval can be a positive process, but can also be difficult to obtain.

In many states, academic research must receive additional approval by research review boards run by the Department of Corrections. These boards may require that the Department be able to access the research responses, making it very difficult to guarantee confidentiality. Further, the Department of Corrections has an interest in impeding the research, especially if the research focuses on institutional violence within prisons or if it furthers a policy agenda contrary to the institution's interests, such as decarcerating survivors.

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**#7 Programs that work with survivors inside prisons, such as support groups or educational courses, may be able to conduct focus groups with survivors away from the constant surveillance of prison staff.**

For many institutions, the safest and most promising option to learn more about the experiences of incarcerated survivors may be to work with community-based organizations already working with incarcerated people. Some community-based programs may already offer programming inside prisons, or provide group or individual services for survivors of trauma inside prisons under an agreement with the prison or Department of Corrections. Working with organizations that already have access to institutions and existing relationships of trust with incarcerated survivors also has the advantage of making it easier for survivors to participate in designing the research tools. Other organizations may do advocacy work in support of incarcerated survivors from outside prisons but will likely have helpful connections and information to share.

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**#8 When working with survivors outside of prison who have experienced criminalization, similar principles apply.**

While survivors who are not currently incarcerated or under criminal supervision may not face the same concerns about retaliation from prison guards and other penal officials, they may still experience harm from police, ICE, or abusers should their participation in the research become known. They may also experience adverse legal consequences if they speak out publicly while their case is pending. If they have legal representation, be sure to recommend that a survivor communicate with their lawyer about participation in the research project if they have an open case.

## Section Three

# EXAMPLE: SURVEY

## for Incarcerated Survivors in California

Survived & Punished California (S&P CA) is a volunteer collective of about 15 people who are survivor advocates, policy advocates, academics, organizers, attorneys, and survivors, some of whom are formerly or currently incarcerated. Between 2017-2018, S&P CA developed a survey to gather information about incarcerated survivors in California state prisons. S&P CA created the survey in collaboration with members of the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP), including incarcerated members.

This collaboration was made possible through long-term connections with incarcerated survivors built through years of advocacy and organizing partnerships with CCWP, and the S&P CA prison visiting team's emerging connections after one year of visits. We also asked advocates from the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project to review the survey and partner with us to ensure we prioritized reaching incarcerated trans women survivors in men's and women's prisons. (Please see Section 5 to learn more about how to create opportunities for research partnerships through sustained connection and advocacy.)

California has a long history of organizing by and on behalf of incarcerated survivors, from both inside and outside prisons. Before launching this research project, S&P CA first learned about the efforts that came before us that no longer exist, while building and reconnecting with incarcerated survivors. Historic efforts include decades-long organizing by Convicted Women Against Abuse (an incarcerated survivor group at CIW, the California Institution for Women), Free Battered Women (mobilized from inside prison by survivors at CIW, Valley State Prison for Women and the Central California Women's Facility), the California Habeas Project, and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. All of these groups except Convicted Women Against Abuse and CCWP have since lost their funding or closed their doors. S&P CA and CCWP gathered as much information as possible from these archives to help reconnect with survivors who led and sustained past efforts.

We developed the survey questions collaboratively with incarcerated survivors, recognizing that currently incarcerated survivors of domestic and sexual violence are experts on criminalized survival and often aware of patterns of criminalization that others are less likely to recognize or understand. We set up a basic structure for the survey to make sure we would be gathering information about how survivors are criminalized at arrest and throughout their prosecution, sentencing and incarceration.



We focused especially on what, if any, post-conviction resources survivors have tried to access, and with what results, including access to survivor advocacy services from anti-violence organizations, access to affordable and competent legal representation, and opportunities to petition for release through recent legislation for incarcerated domestic violence survivors. We found a past survey from the California Habeas Project after we drafted our own and used it as a reference to make sure we weren't missing anything. We also included a section at the end of the survey that asks survivors to envision what resources they believe could have prevented their criminalization, and what they believe needs to change to increase pathways to release for criminalized survivors. **Please see [Appendix A](#) for a copy of the Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons.**

We were careful in our introduction to the survey to explain that we are a new, volunteer collective with very limited resources. We were aware that distributing the survey to survivors throughout California's prisons would highlight S&P as a resource for survivors, and we felt it was important to make clear our limited capacity at the time to offer direct support for survivors. We also made it clear in the survey introduction that survivors could fill out the survey anonymously if they preferred. Because ingoing and outgoing prison mail requires a return name and address, we recognized the limits of anonymity and suggested that peer advocates inside could gather and send surveys back in batches to increase chances of confidentiality.

We distributed the survey to incarcerated survivors in our network, as well as to incarcerated members of the TGI Justice Project and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. We chose the Asian Law Caucus, where some of our members are affiliated, as a reliable return address, and included pre-stamped return envelopes to reduce the likelihood that money for stamps would be a barrier to participation. We recommended in our cover letters that participants return their surveys by legal mail to reduce the risk of prison-monitoring and potential retaliation. Our prison visiting team checked in to see how the circulation of surveys was going. We learned that people inside were enthusiastically filling them out and sharing fresh copies with as many people as possible. They reported that the survey made them feel as if their experiences and stories mattered. Almost immediately, we began receiving hundreds of filled out surveys in the mail.

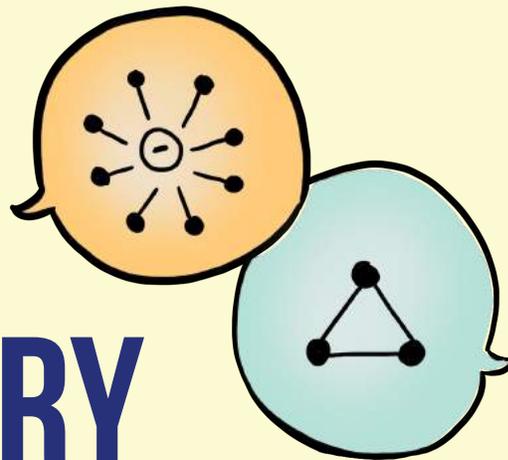
We worked in collaboration with local students in a course at UC Berkeley who took the survey on as a class project. They digitized the survey results using Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com) to systematize the process of analyzing the findings. As the prison visiting team continued our visits, we updated our incarcerated partners about the status of the research and told them we look forward to reviewing the findings with them. One initial observation with respect to the survey findings is the degree of nuance in information survivors provide about their experiences of criminalization, including patterns of prosecutorial choices and other forms of judicial discretionary power that perpetuate the “abuse to prison” pipeline.

In addition to this survey, S&P CA organized a two-day focus group/strategy convening with formerly incarcerated survivors exploring survivors’ many pathways to incarceration, and how to increase pathways to freedom. Similarly to our process with the survey, we reconstructed a database of formerly incarcerated survivors with the help of CCWP’s network, and by combing through previous Free Battered Women contacts and material from other organizations that no longer exist. We raised funds through grassroots fundraising, in-kind resources from UC Berkeley, and a grant from UC Irvine to cover the cost of the convening, including travel costs and honoraria for participants.

We were mindful of incorporating strategies for the participants to safely process traumatic events and we used a variety of methods for participants to share their experiences, including inviting people to journal, share their stories aloud if they felt comfortable doing so, and read letters from several incarcerated survivors who submitted narratives to include. See the preliminary report from that convening in Appendix B for more details.

Our goal is to analyze the survey findings and the convening findings together to produce a more comprehensive qualitative and quantitative report.

## Section Four



# PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

## Why Participatory Action Research? (Adapted from RFR Researchers)

Participatory Action Research (or PAR) is an essential component of organizing for social change. Before and while taking action or mobilizing for change as individuals or communities, it is essential to gather information about the realities of our own lives and material conditions, those of our communities, and those of the institutions and systems we hope to change. Without this important step, our organizing will be less effective because we lack knowledge about the situation we are trying to change and the resources we have to change it.

Traditionally, this type of research for organizing has been conducted by people and organizations which are separate from the people who are organizing to take action. We rely on “researchers,” academics, “think tanks” and the mainstream or alternative media to develop the knowledge we need to organize. This approach has both advantages and disadvantages. However, we believe that, as a general rule, this approach does not fully integrate or maximize the knowledge and expertise people have about their own lives and conditions, replicates disempowering dynamics between individuals, communities, and institutions, and ultimately does not serve the needs of organizing because the interests of the “researchers” and the “researched” are not the same.

Participatory action research is an alternative approach to building the knowledge we need to effectively mobilize for change. By integrating information gathering, analysis, and dissemination into organizing efforts, it facilitates building a base of individuals who are knowledgeable about the issues that impact them and empowered to take action. PAR can contribute to base-building and leadership development, as research activities serve as outreach mechanisms that immediately connect individuals to an issue and encourage them to develop a critical analysis of the forces at play. It can represent a means of ensuring that individuals most impacted by particular conditions are directly and integrally involved in identifying issues of greatest importance to them and directing organizing efforts to achieve the change they seek. It can be a way of “making power” in communities where feelings of disempowerment impede organizing efforts and ensuring accountability to the individuals and communities on whose behalf we seek change.

## So what is PAR?

Essentially, PAR is an approach to organizing and base building which centers involving individuals and communities most affected in the process of identifying issues, and in intentional and collective gathering and analysis of the information needed to act on those issues. It's building power through knowledge and action. The research component of organizing becomes transformative for all involved because it leads people to a deeper understanding of their context and conditions, and allows them to create knowledge regarding their own circumstances, evaluate the 'knowledge' created by others about them, and use the power of knowledge in action for change.

## Some official “definitions” of PAR we agree with:

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a method of social investigation of problems involving participation of people directly impacted by oppression in problem posing and solving. It is an educational process for the researchers and participants, who analyze the structural causes of named problems through collective discussion and interaction. Finally, it is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social change.

- The focus of PAR is on groups directly impacted by colonization, marginalization, exploitation, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, lack of access to resources, etc.
- The definition of the “problem” originates within the community or workplace itself.
- The research goal is to fundamentally improve the lives of people directly impacted by the “problem” through structural transformation.
- The people in the community or workplace are involved in controlling the entire research process.
- The people themselves are researchers, working directly alongside people who have specialized research training to develop and increase awareness of their research skills and capabilities.
- The researchers with specialized training may be outsiders to the community, but are committed learners in a process of fighting for change, not detached participants striving for false “objectivity.”

Three key elements distinguish participatory research from traditional approaches to social science: people, power, and praxis (applying theory in action).

It is people-centered in the sense that the process of inquiry is informed by and responds to the experiences and needs of people affected by systemic relations of power. Participatory research promotes empowerment through the development of common knowledge and critical awareness which are suppressed by the dominant knowledge system.

Participatory research is also about praxis. It recognizes the inseparability of theory and practice and critical awareness of the personal and political. Participatory research is grounded in an explicit political stance and clearly articulated value base.

## How do you do PAR?

There's no set "method" for doing PAR which can be taught and universally applied. There are only principles that guide the methods chosen and the manner in which they are used to gain knowledge about particular conditions. Some of the principles we believe are central to using PAR for organizing are:

- Placing people who are directly affected by the issues at the center of the process. Individuals most impacted by the conditions around which organizing will take place are integrally involved in selecting the issue(s) which will be the focus of research and organizing, deciding what information is needed to act on those issues, gathering the information, critically analyzing and disseminating the information, acting on the information, and critically reflecting on each of these activities. People directly affected by oppressive conditions are viewed as experts in their own experience and become active researchers in their own right -- not just passive sources of information - and partner with individuals with research skills who are ideally also from the community. Community organizers and researchers are clear about their role as facilitators of the PAR process and focus on sharing skills and building leadership capacity.
- Demystification of research and researchers. Researchers and organizers work toward transparency of process, such as explaining and documenting research practices and methodologies through skill-sharing and knowledge sharing.
- Identification and undermining of power relations existing among the group and between researchers and community organizers and the group. Addressing tendencies to afford greater deference to "researchers" and those engaged in what we perceive as "traditional research" than those directly affected by the issues being researched.
- Building knowledge toward transformation of a situation or reality, as opposed to knowledge for knowledge's sake, or to reinforce existing power structures.

- Integration of reflection throughout the process, not just in an “evaluation” at the end.
- Accountability to individuals directly affected by the issues.
- Commitment to ensuring that ownership of information remains with the community, to use as they see fit.

## Some stages of the PAR process, which may not necessarily take place in this order:

- Investigation of the Landscape of existing organizing, knowledge, institutions, power relations, individuals and communities involved
- Organization of the Project - identification of key participants, location
- Problem Posing: identifying and understanding individuals’ and communities’ perceptions of their most significant problems
- Linking individual interpretations of problems to broader contexts
- Researching reality, analysis and dissemination of collected information
- Identification and development of action projects
- Critical reflection is integrated throughout every phase

## What is not PAR?

Often researchers and organizers conduct surveys and interviews of individuals directly impacted by the conditions they want to study or organize around. However, the researchers or organizers set the framework, questions, timelines, and methods of information gathering. They may involve members of an organization or community in information gathering (i.e. conducting surveys), but will retain control over the questions and overall structure of the project, and the analysis of the information and decisions regarding what actions are to be taken, without engaging in meaningful discussion or dialogue with individuals who are directly affected by the issues. While researchers or organizations may frame such activities as “participatory,” they do not integrate the principles of PAR.

## Challenges of PAR

**Time.** PAR takes a long time, for various reasons. Landscaping and becoming familiar with and trusted by the community can take a year or more. Involving individuals and community members in a new and time-consuming process can take time to build trust and investment in the utility of the process, and to identify and address barriers to individuals’ participation. The process is “messy” in that it must allow for adjustment based on the needs of directly affected communities. The group must learn as it’s doing, so it’s hard to plan for. It involves lots and lots and lots and lots of meetings.

**Integrating PAR into organizing timelines when process and action to be taken cannot be predetermined.** “Campaigns” around the issues being researched should stop during investigation/reflection phases of PAR in order for folks to feel like the process is real.

**Unlearning existing frameworks of research** (both for directly affected communities and organizers/researchers)

**Leadership development** – community members need to “unlearn” existing power relations.

# Activist Inquiry

*Adapted from work by Catlin Fulwood*

Activist Inquiry uses participatory evaluation research and action based research as strategies for organizing and actualizing our social change work. Activist inquiry engages research participants in an intentional search for knowledge and understanding that is framed by the development of learning questions grounded in the lived experiences and day to day work of the participants. Utilizing popular education based learning, this process of inquiry uses structured and creative methods for collecting information that is then applied formally and informally in critical thinking to develop outcome-based organizing strategies while expanding the capacity of participants and community to make social change. Activist inquiry is centered in a belief in shared power among participant researchers through building skills, creating access to new information, and a vocabulary with which to articulate the work which can be translated into an action based plan for community change.

## Activist Inquiry is...

- a method for developing outcome-based organizing strategies and social change goals;
- grounded in the principles of popular education, evaluation, and constituent driven participatory research;
- a process that allows constituents and practitioners to embark upon a deliberate and structured journey together -- one that encourages the collaborative and cooperative development of “learning questions” which guide the direction of the journey, encourages creative analysis, and ultimately shapes the organizing and social change outcomes that are derived from the process.

## Using Inquiry in Our Everyday Lives

In order to understand and utilize the methods of research, it is important to realize that we use inquiry in our daily lives as we deal with the millions of decisions (both big and small) that mark our existence on the planet - as a means of gathering information for decision making or just navigating the waters of life. Often this information gathering and analysis is the same as the process undertaken when we set out to conduct inquiry into a particular issue. We do it intuitively and with more or less intentionality depending on our level of anal retentiveness.

When we think about research, we often think about it in terms of collecting numbers or other information to satisfy a funder; or in terms of some outside researcher's desire to know more about our community's problems. In reality though, research provides us with an opportunity and a process for identifying the things we want to know about our own work and the communities and people we work in and with.

Inquiry is an intuitive and natural skill that most of us possess. We often use it unconsciously, but we can learn to use it more intentionally as we go about the business of life, or as we confront major issues about which we have to make critical decisions. We are curious by nature, and we seek to make sense of the meaning of life by asking questions and observing life around us - how and why it works the way it does.

*The process of decision making and problem solving that we use in everyday life reflects the process of research –*

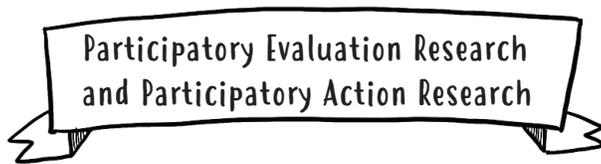
- we identify a problem or question (from what to wear today to “do I stay in this relationship even though it sucks?”, get a new job, move to Canada, or go to the movies);
- we figure out the information or data we need to better understand the issue and the sources through which we seek that information (trusted friends and confidantes, fashion magazines, the national weather service, our spiritual guide or fandango.com);

- we go about the process of gathering that data from a number of sources (interviews, reading, technology, observation, intuition);
- we process or “analyze and interpret” the data or information (we all do this differently – some in the shower, some while driving, some at 4am when our minds are finally at rest) until we come to some “ah-ha” moment or point of clarity about the decision to be made;
- we are influenced throughout this process by our values and principles, by the urgings of those we trust, by the example of those we wish to be like, by culture and identity, and by circumstance and the realization of consequences that can result from our decisions;
- we sometimes have to gather more data to move from our “ah-ha” moment to actually taking some action or “applying our learnings” to the decision making process;
- we analyze the additional data and look for trends or patterns in the information that provide guidance on a course of action;
- we make a decision and take action accordingly; and realize that we have given birth to a whole new set of decisions, knowledge, and perhaps, new questions.

This process can span an hour or months (sometimes years). As we use and recognize the steps we become more intentional in our thinking, we develop our critical thinking skills and abilities to process complex sets of sometimes conflicting information. We develop new mechanisms for decision making and systems of support for taking action; becoming more proactive in the way we lead our lives. In order for research to have meaning in our programs, it must have some tie to how we live our lives; and how we make sense of its meaning.

When we think about inquiry in relation to our programs it must also have meaning and relevance for the people whose lives are affected (both staff and participants) by the learnings and the application of the learnings. Making meaning and making

change are transformative processes that affect individuals, groups and systems in each of these spheres – making change a force that radiates from the core into the outer spheres.



Participatory Evaluation Research  
and Participatory Action Research

Evaluation research can tell us valuable things about the effectiveness of some aspect of our work. It can tell us many things about why programs are meaningful to one group and not another, what types of things matter to a particular community, how people define an issue, and what it takes to make change – in an individual or in a community. It can also tell us about how people define community – whether it's by blood connection, spirituality or culture, geography, lifestyle or experience of identity. Action based research can provide a structure and process for exploring community issues as identified by our constituencies as being of importance to their lives and visions for change.

PER/PAR provide ways of working together in community to find new answers to questions we think are critical to the life and well being of the community. These questions are posed by the members of the community (defined by identity, affinity, circumstance or geography) and answered through a structured process of information gathering and analysis. It is both a process for learning new things and a means of demonstrating the need for change that involves everyone as a knowledge producer.

## What Participatory Evaluation and Action Research have to do with Social Change

- Grounded in principles of inclusion, liberation and self determination
- Helps participants develop a relationship with organizing and the power of individual and collective voice
- Provides opportunities and skills for critical assessment and thinking about the environments and institutional forces that affect our lives; and language to articulate those perceptions
- Uses assessment as a process for engaging a constituency in understanding and articulating what's going on in a community or with a certain issue
- Provides a basis for organizing that is outcome-focused and leads to action and change
- Provides opportunities for shared power and decision making
- Demystifies research and decentralizes the power of the researcher

## Uses for Participatory Evaluation and Action Research

There are a number of interesting ways that evaluation can be used. It can enrich our programs, provide new skills to community members, and provide another tool for social change work.

Participatory research can be used:

- To identify constituencies within communities – what they know and feel about issues and what it will take to mobilize them into some action.
- To map the values and practice of a community; and to create a blueprint of the layout and interactions of a community.
- To determine effective strategies and approaches and to document the process of program development and implementation.
- To engage constituencies/communities in peer assessment of the community.
- To identify learning questions that help us to understand our work more deeply.
- To provide time and space to discuss issues of critical importance to the community.
- To measure the effect of particular educational materials and community education activities.
- To refine current strategies and develop new strategies.
- To recognize and document points of empowerment and mobilization.
- To tell the story of our community in a comprehensive and compelling manner.
- To develop instruments and processes for capturing incremental change in a particular constituency over time.

## PAR Examples

*Girls do what they have to do to survive: Illuminating Methods used by Girls in the Sex Trade and Street Economy to Fight Back and Heal (A Participatory Research Action Study of Resilience and Resistance)*

Published by Young Women's Empowerment Project in 2009, this detailed report is a great example of a PAR project led by young people.

<http://bit.ly/ywepresearch>

*Stop Law Enforcement Violence Toolkit, Participatory Action Research Section*

Published by INCITE! in 2008, the PAR section of this toolkit includes multiple examples of surveys and tools from grassroots organizations researching the impact of police and ICE enforcement violence.

<https://incite-national.org/participatory-action-research/>



## Section Five

# RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

## Creating Opportunities through Connection & Advocacy

Remember that the statistics we generate represent real people. While being able to identify the scope of the problem is a critical step, it's just one step in a long process of research, advocacy, and organizing.

In the S&P California survey example, years of relationships built on connection, support, and organizing partnerships were crucial for us in building real collaboration with incarcerated survivors. In particular, CCWP's decades long relationships with currently and formerly incarcerated advocates across prison walls facilitated our connections to survivors. We can understand this work as a kind of "mutual aid," which is defined by the Big Door Brigade as "projects that are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions, not just through symbolic acts or putting pressure on their representatives in government, but by actually building new social relations that are more survivable."

Developing meaningful and sustained research partnerships with incarcerated survivors can be facilitated through a consistent practice of demonstrating care and allyship through connection and advocacy. This section offers information about how to connect with, advocate for, and partner with incarcerated survivors.

Once you have identified criminalized/incarcerated survivors, there are a number of ways you can provide support. Many of the insights we present in this section were developed with Alexis Mansfield, lead attorney at Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) in Chicago. CGLA has been working with incarcerated survivors in Illinois who are eligible to petition for new sentences due to a recently passed state law (SB0209). These insights also have grown out of the work of Love & Protect and Mothers United Against Violence and Incarceration.

## Local Connections

One important thing to do when reaching out to incarcerated survivors is to develop an understanding of what is going on locally so that you can help survivors connect with appropriate resources. Research whether there is legislation in your state that allows incarcerated survivors to petition for release or a new sentence if their incarceration is related to domestic violence.

Presently, California and Illinois are the only states with this type of legislation in place. California Penal Code §1473.5 allows people who were convicted of a violent felony prior to August 29, 1996 to file a writ of habeas corpus<sup>1</sup> based on evidence related to intimate partner violence not introduced at the original trial that, had it been introduced, likely would have altered the outcome of the court proceedings. Additional information about California's law is available [here](#). Illinois SB0209 allows incarcerated survivors of domestic violence to petition the court for relief if they can present evidence that domestic violence contributed to their conviction. Additional information about Illinois's law is available [here](#).

If your state does not have a similar law in place, research whether groups are advocating for this legislation in your state. The Correctional Association of New York's Women in Prison Project is advocating for passage of the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA). This act would allow judges to use alternative-to-incarceration sentences for domestic violence survivors, even if such a sentence conflicts with sentencing guidelines, and would allow incarcerated survivors serving sentences of eight or more years to petition the court for resentencing. Additional information about the DVSJA is available [here](#).

A good place to start when figuring out what advocacy already is underway in your state is to contact groups that are doing work related to women's prisons, the criminalization of trans people, gender-based violence, and/or prison abolition. Appendix E includes some of those groups. If no campaigns to pass legislation to reduce criminalization of survivors or obtain relief for incarcerated survivors are happening in your community, we hope this toolkit will help you to connect with local groups and begin developing your own campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> A writ of habeas corpus is a motion (an appeal to the courts) that a detained/incarcerated person can file to determine whether they are being lawfully incarcerated.

## Listen to Survivors

Even if your state does not have a law in place offering relief to criminalized survivors post-sentencing, there still are multiple, important ways you can support survivors. A critical first step is to connect with and listen to survivors. Once you have identified incarcerated survivors in your state, ask them what type of support they want. For legal and safety reasons, it is imperative not to release information about survivors, particularly information that will identify them, without explicit approval from the individual. Additionally, it is important not to assume that all incarcerated survivors will want support or will want the same type of support. While some survivors may be interested in connecting with a pen pal or visitor, others may not, but they may appreciate receiving holiday cards or one-time notes of support. So when first contacting an incarcerated survivor, ask them what type of support they want (if any) and what information you can share (ex. full name, first name only, prison where they are located) and with whom.

## Financial Support

Incarcerated survivors often need financial support, such as money on their books so that they can purchase items from commissary, including food, shoes, undergarments, warm clothing, sanitary pads, and additional basic hygiene items. Many incarcerated survivors lack support from family and friends on the outside. The circumstances surrounding the abuse they survived and their conviction may have isolated them from people who once were supportive. Incarcerated survivors may feel shame about the abuse they have survived and their imprisonment, which is reinforced by the blame they have experienced from the criminal legal system and possibly from family and friends of the person who abused them. This shame and blame can prevent survivors from requesting and receiving the assistance they need.

For survivors who have been incarcerated for many years, the time away can whittle down what once was a strong support network. Supportive loved ones may have moved or passed away. Even survivors who have strong support networks on the outside can benefit from additional support. The emotional toll and financial costs of supporting an incarcerated loved one are significant. Family and friends on the outside may welcome assistance from supporters in meeting an incarcerated survivor's needs.

## Emotional Support

Letting incarcerated survivors know that they are not alone and are not forgotten is another important form of support. Ask incarcerated survivors if they are interested in receiving letters from people on the outside. Specify whether they are seeking a pen-pal relationship with someone, if they are interested in receiving a one-time letter, or both. It is important not to give incarcerated survivors false hope for connections, so be clear about what they want and what you can provide. Then, you can organize letter writing and/or pen pal matching events. Make sure you are clear with attendees about the level of commitment you are seeking, and, when possible, provide options.

For letter writing events, it is helpful to give a brief presentation to attendees about the way the state punishes survivors, particularly women of color, transgender people, and gender-nonconforming people, for self-defense and other survival acts, and the importance of providing incarcerated survivors with support. Provide brief descriptions of the incarcerated survivors to whom attendees will be writing. If specific survivors are seeking a pen pal, try to match them with attendees who are interested in developing a pen pal relationship. You also can have attendees sign in and indicate if they are interested in becoming a penpal. Then, after the event, you can work on matching people.

Mail call in prisons is a public act that signals to guards, prison personnel, and other people who are incarcerated that the incarcerated survivor has a support network on the outside that is paying attention to the treatment that the survivor is receiving during their incarceration. It will also be important to let attendees know the harm reduction role that letter writing events can play in supporting incarcerated survivors so the attendees understand the impact of their action.

Provide letter writing supplies, such as paper, cards, pens, colored pencils, envelopes, and stamps. Make sure to check your state's Department of Corrections' website for restrictions on mail correspondence. Most states do not allow stickers, glitter, glue, crayons, or cards that have items attached to them. It's best to use plain cards that do not include any shiny or reflective material. You may also be interested in creating homemade cards folded out of multi-colored construction paper, for states where colored paper is allowed.

Most states require a return address on items mailed to people in prison. Provide attendees with the option to use their personal address as the return address if they are comfortable doing so. Let attendees know that they may receive a response from the person to whom they write and should think about whether they have capacity to carry on a correspondence if they do receive a reply. Also let attendees know that they will want to write a return address on the actual card that they send in case the incarcerated survivor is not given the envelope for their card. For attendees who do not want to use their personal address, it is helpful to provide them with the address of your organization or a partner organization. You may want to consider renting a post office box that you can use as a return address.

It is also helpful to provide attendees with some guidelines on what to include in their letters. It can feel awkward to write to someone you've never met and people may worry about writing the wrong thing. In general, offer encouragement and attempt to make some type of connection. You can write about your day or upcoming plans. You also can describe the event you are attending and let the letter recipient know how many people have come out to support incarcerated survivors. Avoid asking about the letter-recipient's case or writing things that can be construed as inciting anything. Remember, all correspondence going in and coming out of prisons are read by censors. Based on their years of experience developing pen pal relationships with incarcerated LGBTQ people, [Black and Pink has developed guidelines](#) and things to consider when writing to incarcerated people, available here. While these guidelines focus on pen pal relationships, they provide helpful insights to anyone who is writing to someone in prison. See the [Survived & Punished guide](#) to writing letters to incarcerated survivors here.

## Court Support

For incarcerated survivors who are able to get their cases into court -- such as for resentencing under a new state law or to challenge a deportation order -- providing court support is another option. Again, check in with the survivor to see if they want court support. Court support involves attending the survivor's court dates. Your continued physical presence in the courtroom, especially if you're part of a group of supporters, lets the judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, and survivor know that people care about and are watching this case.

By being present in court, you also can offer support to the survivor's family members and friends who may be in attendance. Even when a positive court outcome seems likely, attending court can be a stressful, draining process for family and friends. In some cases, family and friends of the person who abused the incarcerated survivor (who are recognized by the state as the "victims" in the case) may attend court dates to show their opposition to any relief for the survivor. In these situations, being in solidarity with the survivor and their family and friends in court can be particularly appreciated and needed.

## Parole Support

Incarcerated survivors who are serving indeterminate sentences (i.e. life sentences) will likely need to prepare to seek parole when they become eligible. Depending on the state, parole support might involve preparing for a parole hearing, or putting together a parole packet to submit for administrative review. This process can be very time-consuming and emotionally taxing, so offering support to survivors as they prepare for parole is key. In most parole processes, people seeking parole will have a better chance of being granted parole if they can show community support for their release, including concrete offers of support (including housing, employment, social support, financial support, etc.). Take some time to learn about the parole process in your state and reach out to groups working with incarcerated people serving life sentences for more information about actual parole practices and chances. Please see the parole prep guides below for helpful framing and strategies for strengthening an applicant's parole chances.

A Self-help Guide to Parole Preparation in New York State  
A Transgender/Gender Nonconforming Guide to Parole Preparation  
Youth Offender Parole Guide (California)

## Clemency Support

Incarcerated survivors might seek post-sentencing relief through applying for Executive Clemency, also called commutation. Survivors serving a sentence for a criminal conviction can petition to their state governor (or US president if in federal prison) to have their sentence commuted, meaning reduced or eliminated. Each state has its own process, so research the process to offer as much support as possible to survivors who want to apply for commutation.

In some cases, organizing public support for clemency for survivors can increase chances of securing clemency grants. Public support for clemency can include: creating online or paper petitions directed to the governor or president, submitting support letters that include concrete resource offers for survivors upon release, planning direct actions at state or federal sites or events, etc. See the California Coalition for Women Prisoners' Commutation Application Guide [here](#).

## Deportation Defense

Criminalized immigrant and refugee survivors who are not US citizens are often punished by the criminal legal system, only to be punished again by the immigration system, facing immigration and deportation processes. Contact with the criminal legal and immigration systems including police, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), and Customs and Border Patrol leave many criminalized immigrant and refugee survivors vulnerable to deportation.

Survivors who are imprisoned in immigration detention and facing deportation may be able to seek relief through prosecutorial discretion from ICE and immigration court appeals. They may also be able to petition for immigration relief under VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), U-Visa, and T-Visa. A pardon from the Governor or the President can stop the deportation of criminalized survivors.

Given limited legal remedies for immigrant and refugee survivors, community organizing campaigns are crucial in tipping the scale in favor of criminalized survivors. Deportation defense organizing strategy should be complementary to the eligible immigration relief and legal strategy. Please see below for resources on deportation defense.

Stand with Nan-Hui Campaign (archived website): <https://standwithnanhui.org>

Alliance for Immigrant Survivors: <https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org>

Southeast Asian Raids (Resources for Refugees Facing Deportation to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos): <https://searaid.org>

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Asian Law Caucus <https://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/what-we-do/litigationcampaigns>

Immigrant Defense Project, Deportation 101 <https://immigrantdefenseproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Deportation101-1-11HiRes.pdf>

Immigration Law Resource Center, Removal Defense: [www.ilrc.org/removal-defense](http://www.ilrc.org/removal-defense)

Make the Road New York: [Immigrant Defense Manual: https://immigrantdefensemanual.org](https://immigrantdefensemanual.org)

United We Dream: Deportation Defense: <https://unitedwedream.org/our-work/deportation-defense/>

## Post-Release Support

Ideally, the incarcerated survivors with whom you connect will be released from prison. This is an important victory. Celebrate and honor it. And recognize that this victory is not an end point. Rather, it marks the beginning of the survivor's next transition and a potential next phase of healing. As is the case with all people released from prison, the survivor likely will face a number of challenges, which may include housing, employment, education, issues related to drug use, mental health concerns (related to the trauma of past abuse and of incarceration), transportation, securing ID, financial assistance, reuniting with children, and reconnecting with family and friends. Additionally, the survivor may need assistance with safety planning, especially if family and friends of the person who previously abused them are angry about the survivor's release.

It can be helpful to talk with the survivor about these potential challenges prior to release and begin planning for how to address them. Then, research local organizations that provide "re-entry" services and that work with domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. It is a good idea to contact organizations directly to get a sense of their politics. In desperate situations, a survivor may have to seek services, such as housing, from an organization whose politics do not align with those of the survivor or with an abolitionist framework. It is important for the survivor to have a clear idea of the organization's rules and regulations and what will be expected of them (ex. attending religious services) if they seek services there.

Launching a grassroots fundraising campaign to support the survivor's release also can be effective in raising money to help the survivor address some of the challenges they face. Of course, public campaigns have the potential to draw attention from supporters of the person who previously abused the survivor. Be extremely careful not to include any information in the fundraising efforts that could be used to locate the survivor or could be used against them.

## The Importance of Collaboration

Supporting incarcerated survivors can be daunting. First, be honest with yourself about your own capacity and determine what you realistically can do. Maybe all you are able to do is attend a letter writing event and send a one-time card to a survivor. That action is meaningful, and your contribution is important to the larger movement to end the criminalization of survivors.

If you are able to take on more support work, find the people and organizations in your community that are doing this work or similar work. Reach out to them, and figure out how you can collaborate in supporting incarcerated survivors. By working together, we will identify and create more resources, and we will realize additional ways we can end the criminalization of survival. This is a long fight that requires that we support one another as we support incarcerated survivors.



When researching criminalization of survivors, it may be helpful to learn more about incarceration in your state. In addition to researching your state's Department of Corrections website, which is listed in Appendix D, you may also research the Bureau of Justice Statistics website at: <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=1>

If you are unable to find information on your state, you can file a public records request with the Department of Corrections or Department of Public Safety in your state. The Freedom of Information Act gives people the right to access federal agency records, except in cases in which one of the nine exemptions or one of the three special law enforcements record exclusion applies.<sup>2</sup>

All 50 states also have their own public records laws which allow members of the public to obtain documents and other public records from state and local government bodies.<sup>3</sup> The National Freedom of Information Coalition has sample letters that you can use in order to submit public records requests to any Department of Corrections in the United States. You can find sample State Freedom of Information Request Letters, which contain the relevant public records request state statutes, here: <https://www.nfoic.org/organizations/state-sample-foia-request-letters>

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2 Cite <https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>

3 Cite this source: <http://www.foiadvocates.com/records.html>

When making public records requests, you must specify what information you are requesting from the department you are seeking information from. You can start by finding out the number of people who are incarcerated for murder and manslaughter in your state, and by requesting information about how many people who are incarcerated reported a history of domestic, sexual, homophobic or transphobic violence in their lifetime and how and if there is a correlation between this history of violence and their convictions. It will also be important to send a follow-up email and or letter with the department you contacted in order to make a record of your request.

Many freedom of information laws have exceptions where departments do not have to provide you with information that the agency does not already collect or have in the form that you are requesting, or information that would compromise law enforcement activities or reveal decision-making processes within an agency. Keep this in mind when formulating your requests. You can often appeal a decision not to provide you with information on one of the grounds in court.

We have included a generic sample letter tailored to the kinds of requests you might want to make for a project focused on criminalized survivors in Appendix D. Appendix E has contact information for each state Department of Corrections.

## Section Seven



# POLICING

While this research guide is primarily focused on how to learn more about and support survivors who are incarcerated, there are also ways that your group can learn more about the policing and prosecutorial practices that contribute to criminalization of survivors of domestic and sexual violence more broadly.

## The Role of Police Officers

Police officers, and police department policies and practices, play a significant role in the criminalization of survivors. Police exercise a great deal of discretion when deciding how to respond to an incident of violence, who to question, investigate, arrest, and charge, and what charges to bring. While ultimately prosecutors make the final charging decisions, how police officers present the case to the prosecutor, and what evidence and mitigating factors they gather and are willing to testify to, have a significant influence over the final outcome.



#1  
Police respond to a call for assistance or a call from a third party



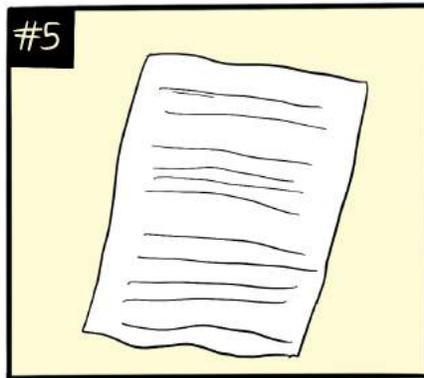
#2  
Police question people involved and witnesses to determine whether a crime has taken place



#3  
Police decide who they suspect of having committed a crime



#4  
Police place individuals under arrest and bring them in for further questioning



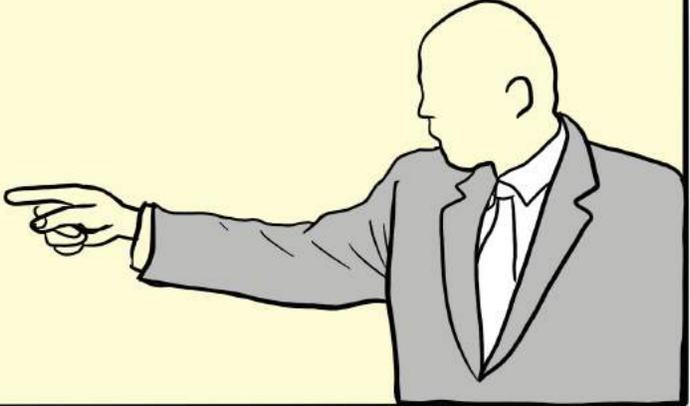
#5  
Police write a narrative describing the events that led to the arrest and recommend charges to be brought



#6  
Police meet with prosecutors to present the case and outline what they will testify to

#7

**PROSECUTORS MAKE FINAL CHARGING DECISION.**



At each point in this process, police officers can decide 1) that no crime was committed, 2) that they believe that a survivor was acting in self-defense or defense of others 3) that the survivor is entitled to leniency for other reasons. While these decisions won't ensure that a prosecutor won't bring charges anyway, they do have a significant influence over whether a survivor is criminalized.

At any point in this process, police officers can also decide whether to refer the survivor to child protective services or immigration enforcement.

## Police Perceptions

The decisions described above are often shaped by police perceptions of survivors. Respondents to a 2015 survey (Goldscheid, et al., 2015) of more than nine hundred anti-violence advocates, survivors, and other stakeholders from almost all fifty states found that police were sometimes or often demeaning or disrespectful to survivors, did not believe them, or did not take domestic violence or sexual assault seriously. Almost a third of respondents said that police sometimes or often used inappropriate force against survivors. They also reported that officers threatened to arrest survivors, particularly if they were called multiple times.

Police perceptions of survivors are further shaped by multiple and interlocking identities. More than half of survey respondents reported anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-LGBTQ perceptions among police officers. They also noted police failure to take seriously violence against young survivors, survivors with mental health issues, drug users, and homeless and low-income survivors. Respondents also felt that officers' attitudes are sometimes rooted in perceptions that violence is simply part of an "impoverished or 'ghetto' lifestyle." Respondents similarly also reported police officers' assumptions that Muslim, South Asian, Arab and Middle Eastern women aren't deserving of protection because violence is inherent to their "culture," as well as discrimination against survivors who don't speak English.

Respondents noted police bias in favor of light-skinned survivors and against Black survivors: police officers are more likely to suspect Black survivors of contributing to the violence or somehow being at fault, and less likely to take claims of Black survivors seriously. They also reported police perceptions that Native survivors have been drinking, and thus contribute to the violence they experience. Officers also assumed Latinx survivors are lying about abuse to qualify for immigration remedies, even if they are US citizens.

## Laws and Departmental Policies

Police responses to incidents of domestic violence are also shaped by state laws and departmental policies. All 50 states have laws governing arrests in domestic violence cases. You can look up your state's law as of 2014 here: [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/domestic\\_violence1/Charts/migrated\\_charts/2014\\_Domestic\\_Violence\\_Arrest\\_Policy\\_Chart..pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/domestic_violence1/Charts/migrated_charts/2014_Domestic_Violence_Arrest_Policy_Chart..pdf). Be sure to check if there have been any changes to the law since then by going to the website for your state legislature, and searching for the law number and for terms like "domestic violence" to see if any legislation has been introduced or passed amending it.

You can also often look up your local police department's policies on the departmental web page - look for a tab linking to "Policies" "Standard Operating Procedures" or "Policy Manual." If the policies are not publicly available through the website, you can file a public information request (see Section 6 and Appendix C).

Laws and policies governing domestic violence arrests fall into three categories:

- 1. Mandatory Arrest** - police officers responding to a domestic violence call must make an arrest if they have probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.
- 2. Pro-Arrest** - police officers responding to a domestic violence call are encouraged to make an arrest if they have probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.
- 3. Warrantless arrest** - police officers are authorized to make an arrest of a person in their home without a warrant if they are responding to a domestic violence call and have probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.

In some cases application of the law or policy will depend on whether the officer has probable cause to believe a more serious crime (a felony) has been committed, the relationship between the parties, or the length of time that has elapsed since the incident. Police officers must follow both the state law and their department's policies, which may require more of them than the state law.

Research suggests that mandatory or pro-arrest policies contribute significantly to criminalization of survivors, including young women of color facing violence in the home (Ritchie 2017; OVW 2016; Sherman 2016). By forcing police officers to find culpability and take someone into custody at the scene, these policies start a chain reaction that often leads to the arrest of survivors.

There are several scenarios in which survivors are revictimized by mandatory arrest policies:

**Dual arrest:** responding officers simply arrest both parties.

**“Misarrest”:** notwithstanding often lengthy histories of being subjected to violence, survivors are deemed by arresting officers to be the aggressor, especially they acted in self-defense.

**Retaliatory arrest:** the abuser manipulates the legal system to secure the arrest of the survivor - by calling police first, by injuring themselves and claiming the survivor is responsible, by disclosing a survivor's drug or alcohol use, prior criminal history, medical history, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status, or otherwise playing on pre-existing police perceptions to frame the survivor as the aggressor.

There are a few ways you can find out about domestic violence arrests in your community:

**Look on your police department or city’s website.**

For instance, New York City makes information about domestic violence calls available on its website at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/reports-analysis/domestic-violence.page>. While there is no public information on the subjects or outcome of the calls, you can make a freedom of information act request for more information about the outcome of the calls.

**Many police departments make data regarding arrests available through the Police Open Data Initiative: <https://www.policedatainitiative.org>.**

- Click on “Explore the Data” and see if your department reports domestic violence calls under “Calls for Service” “Incidents” or “Stop Searches and Arrests.”
- Once you are in a table, click on “View Data” and see if there is a column for domestic violence incidents, search for “domestic,” or the law number for the state domestic violence law. Sometimes you can also sort by gender and race such that you can see all of the cases where a Black woman was arrested for domestic violence. You can then use the case numbers to request additional information about the case under the state freedom of information law.

## Advocacy Tips

#1

Reach out to domestic violence agencies in your area and ask them what they are already doing about criminalization of survivors. Some agencies, like local LGBTQ Anti-Violence Projects, may already be tracking how often survivors are arrested and in what areas/circumstances, and may already have developed an advocacy campaign to address the criminalization of survivors.

#2

If you are already in relationship with an individual survivor who is being criminalized, get involved as early as possible in a case - if it's possible, be on the scene to observe and take notes on how police officers are responding to the survivor and framing the evidence.

#3

If the survivor consents, create a support team of advocates. Ask to meet with investigating officers to offer a different framing/perspective on the incident.

#4

Request a meeting with the police department's special victims unit to advocate for a different framing/approach to the incident.

#5

Consider mounting a campaign to advocate for repeal of mandatory/pro-arrest policies/laws on the grounds that these policies, in combination with police perceptions, are contributing to criminalization of and harm to survivors.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A:

California Survived & Punished Survey (2018)

## APPENDIX B: Update on Research & Strategy

Convening to Free Incarcerated Survivors (2018)

## APPENDIX C: Sample Public Information Request Letter

## APPENDIX D: State Departments of Correction

# APPENDIX A

## Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons

### Introduction

Dear Survivor,

**We are writing to ask for your participation in a survey about incarcerated survivors of domestic and sexual violence in California prisons.** The survey was created by Survived and Punished (S&P) and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP). Survived and Punished is a national project to end the criminalization of survivors through organizing, advocacy, education, and direct support. We are a small but dedicated group of volunteers committed to freeing incarcerated survivors.

**For many survivors, experiences of domestic and sexual violence lead to criminalization and incarceration.** California passed some laws for post-conviction relief for domestic violence survivors, but we know that few have been able to benefit from this relief. We know that some survivors are still waiting on appeals and that others still need legal support. We also know that many more survivors are not eligible under this law. We see this survey as an important opportunity to gather information about what has and has not worked under these laws and to share ideas about how to free more survivors.

**Please fill out as much of the attached survey as you can.** The first page of the survey offers you the choice to include your name and contact information, but if you wish to remain anonymous, you can skip these questions. We will not distribute anything with your name attached without permission from you. The information in this survey will be reviewed by volunteers from S&P, CCWP, and the Transgender, Gender-Variant, Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP). Unfortunately, due to limited capacity and resources, we cannot respond to every person individually.

**There are no wrong answers to this survey.** If you feel the need to clarify any of your answers, please feel free to do so on the back of the survey. If you need support after taking this survey, please reach out to existing support systems that may be available, including domestic violence peer advocates.

**We plan to gather the information we collect from this survey into a report to help guide us as we develop a plan to free more incarcerated survivors in California.** The report will not include names or any other identifying information. We will share this report with you and a wide network of people and organizations, with the aim of keeping the leadership and experience of incarcerated survivors at the center of this conversation and movement. As we grow this project, our intention is to develop more resources to better meet the needs of incarcerated survivors.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and thank you in advance for any information you choose to share with us.**

**\*\*\* Please mail this survey back to: \*\*\***

**Survived & Punished  
c/o Asian Law Caucus  
55 Columbus Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94111**

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

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**California Habeas Law** — In January 2002, Penal Code §1473.5 became law, making CA the first state to permit “battered women” convicted of killing their batterers before 1996 to file a writ of habeas corpus (an appeal) with evidence demonstrating how the battering and its effects led to the killing. The law was expanded in 2005 and 2012 to include gender neutral language, to include survivors convicted of other violent felonies, and to allow survivors to present intimate partner battering evidence at parole.

**California Habeas Project** — The California Habeas Project, also known as The Habeas Project, was a collaboration that advocated for reducing the sentences of domestic violence survivors incarcerated for crimes related to their experiences of being abused (2002-2013).

**Commutation of sentence** — A commutation of sentence, also known as Executive Clemency, is a reduction or elimination in sentence ordered by a Governor through executive power. In a commutation of sentence, a person is not absolved from a conviction completely, but their sentence is reduced or eliminated.

**Criminalization** — A systemic process in which behaviors and individuals are considered “crimes” and “criminals” because of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression.

**Domestic Violence** — violence committed by a family or household member against another (various types of violence include physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, cyber, and verbal).

**Domestic Violence Peer Advocates** — Peer advocacy is one-to-one support provided by advocates with a similar experience to persons accessing support services. Trained and supported volunteers often provide peer advocacy as part of a coordinated project.

**Gender identity** — How a person sees their own gender, which may or may not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Gender non-conforming** — Refers to people whose gender expression doesn’t match stereotypes associated with their gender assigned at birth.

**Gender violence** — Violence against others for reasons related to gender-based oppression, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and anti-trans and anti-LGBT/queer violence.

**Intimate Partner Battering (IPB)** – acts of violence committed against a person in an intimate relationship. Battering happens in relationships between people of all genders and sexualities and people of all genders can be the one being victimized and/or being abusive.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** — a condition of persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of injury or severe psychological shock, typically involving disturbance of sleep and vivid recall of the experience, with dulled responses to others and to the outside world.

**Survivor** — a person who survives abuse of any and all forms, especially a person remaining alive after an event in which others have died.

**Two-spirit** — The term Two-Spirit was chosen as a Native intertribal term as a way to communicate numerous gender identities and traditions outside of a European gender binary of male/female. Niizh manitoag (two-spirits) indicates the presence of both a feminine and a masculine spirit in one person. (adapted from Qwo-Li Driskell)

# Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons

## PART 1: Basic info

1. What is your name?

2. What is your CDCR number?

3. Prison:

4. What is your date of birth?

Date

5. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

Native American or Alaskan Native

Asian / Pacific Islander

Black or African American

Latino

White / Caucasian

Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

6. What is your current gender identity? (Check all that apply.)

Female

Male

Gender non-conforming

Transgender

Two-spirit

Other (please specify)

7. How do you describe your sexual orientation?

8. Do you consider yourself to have a disability/disabilities?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, please describe:

10. Are you a US-citizen?

- Yes
- No

11. Are you a veteran?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

12. Did you survive abuse as a child?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13. If yes, did the abuse you survived as a child play a role in your incarceration?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

14. Did you survive abuse as an adult prior to your incarceration?

- Yes
- No

15. If yes, did the abuse you survived as an adult play a role in your incarceration?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

16. Do you think you have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related to the abuse you suffered?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

## Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons

### PART 2: Arrest, conviction, & sentencing

17. When were you arrested?

Date

MM/DD/YYYY

18. When were you convicted?

Date

MM/DD/YYYY

19. What was your conviction?

20. What county were convicted in?

21. Did you have any prior convictions?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

22. Were you convicted by trial or plea bargain?

- Trial
- Plea bargain

23. Were you convicted under the "felony murder rule" (meaning, prosecutors argued that you were part of an underlying felony that resulted in a murder)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

24. Were you convicted as an accomplice or "aider and abettor"?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

25. Did you have a co-defendant?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

26. If yes, what was your relationship to your co-defendant?

27. If yes, what sentence did your co-defendant receive? (Please state whether through plea bargain or trial.)

28. If yes, was your co-defendant abusing you?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

29. Do you believe your gender played a role in your conviction?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

30. Do you believe your race or ethnicity played a role in your conviction?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

31. Do you believe your income status (i.e. poor, low income, middle-class) played a role in your conviction?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

32. What is your sentence?

33. Is your sentence what you expected?

34. Was your attorney appointed or privately paid?

- Appointed Attorney
- Paid Attorney

35. Who was your attorney?

36. Did you feel your attorney did a good job helping you?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Did you feel your attorney did a good job helping you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How was your attorney helpful or unhelpful?

37. How long were you in county jail pre-trial?

38. How long have you been in state prison?

39. Are you parole eligible?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

40. Have you ever been incarcerated in an immigration detention center?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

41. Have you ever been incarcerated in a juvenile detention center?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**PART 3: Context of arrest**

42. At the time of your arrest, were you in a relationship with someone that was abusive (i.e. you experienced physical, mental, and/or emotional abuse)?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Frequency of abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. At the time of your arrest, were you in a relationship with someone that was controlling (i.e. your partner did not leave your house, or controlled access to your money)?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Frequency of abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. Was your arrest and conviction related to defending yourself against violence?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

45. If yes, were you defending yourself against gender violence (i.e. sexual violence, domestic violence, and/or anti-trans/anti-queer violence)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

46. If yes, did you know the person or people who you defended yourself against?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

47. Did the circumstances that led to your arrest related to a controlling or abusive relationship?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

48. Before your arrest, did you ever talk to a friend or family member about what you were experiencing in your relationship?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

49. Before your arrest, did you reach out to any anti-violence, including domestic violence, organizations (i.e. hotlines, shelters)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

50. If yes, describe your experience seeking anti-violence services:

51. If you sought anti-violence support services, was language ever a barrier for you?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

52. Did you ever seek medical attention for an injury related to the abuse?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

53. Before your arrest, were there city/county/state records of the abuse you survived?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

54. After your arrest, did you ever talk to a psychologist, doctor, or other expert about your abuse history?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

55. Did your attorney introduce evidence of abuse (domestic violence, intimate partner battering) in your case?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

56. Did you ask for an expert witness on domestic violence/intimate partner battering during your prelim proceedings or trial?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

57. If yes, did an expert witness testify on your behalf at your trial?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

58. If yes, who was your expert witness?

59. If yes, were you satisfied with the expert witness testimony on your behalf?

	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
How satisfied were you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

60. Did you have access to any language interpretation you needed in court?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

61. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

62. If yes, were your parental rights terminated?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

63. If yes, are your children living with:

- Relatives
- Friends
- Adoptive Family
- Child Protective Services
- In state custody
- I don't know

64. If yes, at the time of your arrest, were you in a relationship with someone who was abusive to your children?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

65. If yes, was your conviction related to an abusive partner harming your children?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

66. If yes, were you convicted under "failure to protect" laws?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

67. Before seeing this survey, did you know about the habeas law that allows some survivors to appeal convictions based on evidence of abuse (CA Penal Code 1473.5)?

- Yes
- No

68. If yes, how did you hear about 1473.5?

- Friend
- Counselor
- Staff
- California Habeas Project
- Free Battered Women
- California Coalition for Women Prisoners
- Other (please specify)

69. As far as you know, are you eligible for an appeal under 1473.5?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

70. If yes, have you filed an appeal?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

71. Do you currently have legal representation for a habeas appeal?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

72. If yes, were you provided legal representation for your appeal through the California Habeas Project?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

73. If yes, please provide the firm and/or attorney name:

74. Was your appeal denied in the courts?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

75. If you are parole eligible, have you or your attorney ever brought up intimate partner battering at a parole hearing, as it relates to your conviction?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

76. If yes, how did the parole commissioners respond to this information?

77. Has the parole board ever ordered an intimate partner battering (IPB) investigation into your case?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

78. If yes, did the investigation substantiate (meaning, confirm) intimate partner battering in your case?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

79. Has the parole board ever used your experience of domestic or sexual violence as a reason to deny your parole?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

80. Were you granted parole but then denied by the Governor?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

81. Have you applied for a commutation of sentence from the Governor's office?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

82. If yes, have you been interviewed about your commutation application?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

83. Do you have concerns that you will be deported if and when you are released from prison?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons**

**PART 5: If you believe you are not eligible for post-conviction relief through 1473.5, please answer:**

84. Why do you believe you are not eligible for 1473.5?

85. What do you think would need to change about the law (1473.5) to make you eligible?

**Survey of Incarcerated Survivors in California Prisons**

**PART 6: Advocacy for criminalized and incarcerated survivors**

86. Can you imagine any kinds of support that could have prevented your arrest (i.e. what support might have changed your situation pre-trial, pre-plea deal or during trial)?

87. What are your recommendations for improving how survivors are treated by the criminal justice system?

88. Can you imagine better pathways to prison release for incarcerated survivors? What does this look like?

89. Are you open to following up with us about sharing any of your story and/or ideas for advocacy?

90. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

## Update on Research & Strategy Convening to Free Incarcerated Survivors

Feb 4, 2018 | Research & Strategy



Convening participants: Ny Nourn, Leeann Nabors, Norma Cumpian, Connie LaFleur, Roberta Brooks, Anna Gilinets, Michele Molina, Romarilyn Ralston, Maria Suarez



Ny Nourn reports back from a strategy session.

Does the #MeToo anti-violence movement reach survivors of domestic and sexual violence in California's women's prisons? Recent reforms to curb mass incarceration in the U.S. have reduced the total number of men in state prisons since 2009, but populations in women's prisons have increased in 35 states. The Prison Policy Initiative **found** that the criminalization of women expanded in part because actions taken to survive domestic and sexual violence (e.g. self-defense, drug dependence, sex industry, etc.) have been increasingly criminalized.

California has been a particularly troubling site for intersections of gender violence and carceral violence.

Though women's incarceration in the state is decreasing, it is likely due to court-ordered reductions in its prison population following a 2011 Supreme Court ruling **asserting** that California's prison overcrowding violated the Eighth Amendment ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has also been **cited** for egregious institutional abuse of people in women's prisons. In 2017, the California State Auditor **released** a highly critical report highlighting CDCR's failure to implement effective suicide prevention and response policies, and uncovering dangerous prison conditions at the California Institution for Women (CIW) which led to a soaring suicide rate over the past four years. Also in 2017, four trans and queer people of color, all of whom identify as survivors of sexual trauma, **filed** a lawsuit against the State of California and the CDCR, stating that they were beaten and sexually violated by correctional officers, and were then denied medical treatment for their injuries and prevented from filing grievances. This lawsuit is one of multiple cases filed against CDCR for sexual violence and wrongful death in the last several years.

**Survived and Punished (S&P)** is an all-volunteer statewide and national project that illuminates the "gender violence to prison pipeline," and analyzes how carcerality is part of the cultural infrastructure of rape and domestic violence. S&P joins **others** who contend that #MeToo efforts that highlight sexual and domestic violence must also address how this violence is an integral component of carceral systems – including police, immigration enforcement, prisons, court systems, and other structures of punishment and surveillance. Therefore, for S&P, securing pathways to freedom from prisons and detention centers must be a central anti-violence goal.

On December 2-3, 2017, S&P convened over 30 advocates and activists who are also formerly incarcerated survivors of domestic or sexual violence. This convening was an opportunity to learn directly from formerly incarcerated survivors about their experiences of criminalization and barriers to release, as well as collectively identify California-based decarceral strategies to increase the rate of prison release for people in women's prisons and trans women in men's prisons.

## **BARRIERS TO RELEASE**

Convening participants identified barriers to release that have been previously documented as ongoing institutional problems, such as the lack of access to free/affordable and effective legal representation, the lack of information about new legislation that increases pathways for release, and coerced plea deals that can forfeit the right to appeal. Additionally, participants also explored lesser known barriers that are often gendered, such as the role of abusive partners in manipulating judicial processes, parole board discrimination against survivors of domestic violence, immediate ICE detention after prison release, and the refusal of prison officials to follow court release

orders, sometimes out of retaliation if the incarcerated person has filed a complaint about abuse while in prison.

The Board of Parole Hearings was highlighted as a particularly problematic institution with largely unchecked power to extend incarceration. Some survivors reported getting rejected for parole over ten times, and others described how identifying as a survivor of gender violence can be used as a reason to prevent their release because it is distorted as evidence that they are not “sufficiently remorseful.” The relationship between ICE enforcement and prisons was also identified as extremely dangerous. Even if some survivors are able to achieve freedom in one system, they may end up facing multiple points of incarceration after being released. The fear of deportation and isolation can cause profound emotional barriers to fighting for release. It is also extremely difficult to secure free/low-cost legal representation with expertise within multiple systems as well as skills for developing dual parole plans.

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants identified multiple key sources of support that helped them navigate their way to freedom. The nonprofit, **California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)**, was cited as a crucial resource that helped create conditions that improved the likelihood of release, including providing volunteer legal advocacy, and advocating for the health and survival needs of imprisoned people.



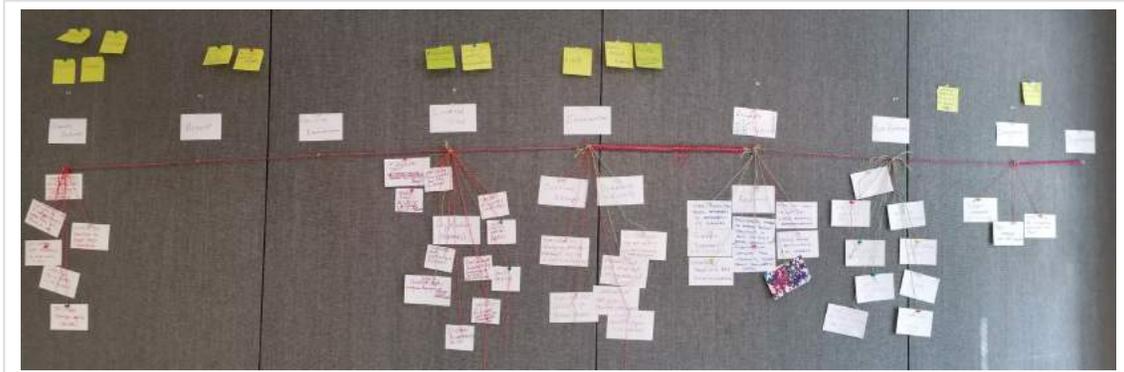
Marissa Alexander reports back from a strategy session.

As a membership-based organization, CCWP also creates community networks inside and outside prisons that decrease isolation and provide the grassroots political support that strengthens advocacy efforts. Community groups, such as the **TGI Justice Project** and the **Asian Law Caucus**, also organize people to attend court hearings, a support that participants identified as a tremendously valuable strategy that supported their feelings of individual worth, and demonstrated community support to the court.

Additionally, participants identified a number of recommended actions to widen the pathways for release, including building more supportive post-release institutions and resources for women, queer, and trans people; building advocacy networks for survivors to provide crucial support such as legal advocacy, health support, etc. as soon as survivors are arrested; holding prosecutors accountable for making choices to prosecute survivors and ending the prosecutorial conviction incentive; increasing organized court watches to decrease isolation and make judicial processes less hidden; exposing how multiple sectors of carceral systems actively discriminate and punish survivors; building more coalitions

between immigration justice advocates and victim advocates; and continuing to support public grassroots defense campaigns that can advocate for commutations and paroles.

This convening was hosted by the **UC Berkeley Center for Race & Gender** and supported with a generous grant from the **UC Irvine Initiative to End Family Violence**. It was an important early step to set the preliminary groundwork for an organizing and advocacy model that incorporates a complex understanding of the criminalization of survival, and increases access to freedom.



Mapping the “gender violence to prison” pipeline.

# APPENDIX C: SAMPLE PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUEST LETTER

Here is a sample letter tailored to some of the information you want to find out about incarcerated survivors in your state. Be sure to check this against the sample letters for your state found at <https://www.nfoic.org/organizations/state-sample-foia-request-letters>

## TITLE

i.e., "People incarcerated on charges of murder or manslaughter," or "Incarcerated survivors of domestic violence."

## AGENCIES

Agency's name, followed by location and address i.e., Department of Corrections, TX or Office of the Governor, Arkansas

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the { insert the name and number of your state's law }, I hereby request the following records:

{Write a short description of the documents you are looking for. The more specific you can be, the better. For instance:

"Any and all data collected by the department of corrections concerning the number of people currently incarcerated in the state on charges of murder or manslaughter, including race, gender, and age of the person incarcerated and location of incarceration" or

"Any and all information concerning the number or percentage of currently incarcerated people who report an experience of domestic violence or sexual assault prior to incarceration" or

"Any and all data or information collected by the department concerning the number of arrests pursuant laws or policies mandating arrest in cases of domestic violence over the past 5 years (2013-2018), including the race, gender and age of the person arrested and location of the arrest.}"

The requested documents will be made available to the general public, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes.

In the event that there are fees, I would be grateful if you would inform me of the total charges in advance of fulfilling my request. However, I would also like to request a waiver of all fees in that the disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to the public's understanding of {describe the issue you are concerned about here.} I would prefer the request to be filled electronically, by e-mail attachment if available or CD-ROM if not.

The {insert the name of your state Freedom of Information law here} requires a response within { insert the number of days the agency has to respond to your request outlined in your state Freedom of Information law} business days. If access to the records I am requesting will take longer, please contact me with information about when I might expect copies or the ability to inspect the requested records.

If you deny any or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the information and notify me of the appeal procedures available to me under the law.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this matter. I look forward to receiving your response to this request within { insert the number of days the agency has to respond to your request outlined in your state Freedom of Information law }.

Sincerely,

{your name and signature}

# APPENDIX D: STATE DEPARTMENTS OF CORRECTION

## Alabama

Alabama Department of Corrections Contact Information:

Mail Address:

Alabama Department of Corrections  
301 S. Ripley Street  
P.O. Box 301501  
Montgomery, AL 36130 - 1501

Central Office Number: (334) - 353 - 3883

Email: [public.records@doc.alabama.gov](mailto:public.records@doc.alabama.gov)

Public Records Request form may be found here:

[www.doc.state.al.us/docs/Form023APublicRecordsRequestForm.pdf](http://www.doc.state.al.us/docs/Form023APublicRecordsRequestForm.pdf)

Filled out and mailed to:

ADOC, Attn: Research & Planning Division  
301 S. Ripley Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
[www.doc.state.al.us](http://www.doc.state.al.us)

## Alaska

Alaska Department of Corrections:  
Research & Records Department Contact Information:

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 112000  
Juneau, Alaska 99811 - 2000

Records Phone: (907) - 465 - 3485

Michael Matthews, Research Analyst, [michael.matthews@alaska.gov](mailto:michael.matthews@alaska.gov)

Mary Anne Howerter  
Criminal Justice Technician II, Records, [mary.howerter.alaska.gov](mailto:mary.howerter.alaska.gov)  
[www.correct.state.ak.us](http://www.correct.state.ak.us)

## Arizona

Arizona Department of Corrections: Public Records Contact Information

Mailing address:

Arizona Department of Corrections  
Media Relations  
1601 W Jefferson Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Phone: (602) 542 - 3133

Online Record Applications may be found here:

[www.arizonadoc.mycusthelp/WEBAPP/rs/S\(eyxdy4hrwymncxxzg2pmyfak\)/supporthome.aspx](http://www.arizonadoc.mycusthelp/WEBAPP/rs/S(eyxdy4hrwymncxxzg2pmyfak)/supporthome.aspx)  
[www.corrections.az.gov](http://www.corrections.az.gov)

## Arkansas

Arkansas Department of Corrections Contact Information:

For all comments or questions pertaining to inmate issues, send your requests to: [adc.inmate.info@arkansas.gov](mailto:adc.inmate.info@arkansas.gov)

Mailing Address:

Arkansas Department of Correction  
P.O. Box 8707  
Pine Bluff, AR 71611 - 8707

[www.adc.arkansas.gov](http://www.adc.arkansas.gov)

## California

To submit a Public Records Act request by mail, send it to:

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
PRA Administrators  
1515 S Street  
Suite 314S  
Sacramento, CA 94283 - 0001

More information may be found here: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/News/CPRA.html>  
[www.cdcr.ca.gov](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov)

## Colorado

Colorado Department of Corrections Contact Information:

[www.doc.state.co.us](http://www.doc.state.co.us)

General Records Requests information may be found here:  
[www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdoc/form/general-records-requests](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdoc/form/general-records-requests)

## Connecticut

Connecticut Department of Corrections  
Freedom of Information Administrator Mailing Address:  
Department of Correction  
Freedom of Information Administrator  
24 Wolcott Hill Road  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

[www.ct.gov/doc/](http://www.ct.gov/doc/)

## Delaware

Delaware Department of Corrections FOIA Requests

Email: [DOC\\_FOI\\_Request@state.de.us](mailto:DOC_FOI_Request@state.de.us)

Mail to:  
Department of Correction  
Attn: Kerri L. Bennett, Paralegal III  
245 McKee Road  
Dover, DE, 19904

Individuals can also send requests online via:

[www.doc.delaware.gov/foiaRequests.shtml](http://www.doc.delaware.gov/foiaRequests.shtml)

[www.doc.delaware.gov/](http://www.doc.delaware.gov/)

## Florida

Florida Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Contact Information:

U.S. Mail or Fax  
Florida Department of Corrections  
ATTN: Public Records Unit  
501 South Calhoun Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399 - 2500

Phone: (850) 717 - 3605

Email: [CO.PublicRecords@fdc.myflorida.com](mailto:CO.PublicRecords@fdc.myflorida.com)

[www.dc.state.fl.us](http://www.dc.state.fl.us)

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## Georgia

Georgia Department of Corrections Contact  
Information:

Open Records Requests may be sent to:  
[open.records@gdc.ga.gov](mailto:open.records@gdc.ga.gov)  
[www.dcor.state.ga.us](http://www.dcor.state.ga.us)

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## Hawaii

Office of the Director  
Deputy Directors for Administration,  
Corrections & Law Enforcement  
Phone: (808) 587 - 1288  
Email: [psd.office.of.the.director@hawaii.gov](mailto:psd.office.of.the.director@hawaii.gov)

Phone: (850) 717 - 3605

Email: [CO.PublicRecords@fdc.myflorida.com](mailto:CO.PublicRecords@fdc.myflorida.com)  
[www.dc.state.fl.us](http://www.dc.state.fl.us)

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## Idaho

Idaho Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
IDOC Central Records  
Attn: Public Records Request  
1299 N. Orchard  
Suite 110  
Boise, ID 83706

Email: Ann Greenwalt, Offender Records

Manager [agreenwa@idoc.idaho.gov](mailto:agreenwa@idoc.idaho.gov)

[www.idoc.idaho.gov](http://www.idoc.idaho.gov)

## Illinois

Illinois Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Contact Information:

Freedom of Information Act Officer Lisa  
Weitekamp  
Illinois Department of Corrections  
1301 Concordia Court  
P.O. Box 19277  
Springfield, IL 62794 - 9277

Phone: (217) 558 - 2200 ext. 4166

Fax: (217) 558 - 5612

Email: [DOC.FOIARequest@illinois.gov](mailto:DOC.FOIARequest@illinois.gov)

More information may be found here:  
[https://www.illinois.gov/idoc/Pages/  
FreedomofInformationAct.aspx](https://www.illinois.gov/idoc/Pages/FreedomofInformationAct.aspx)

[www.illinois.gov/idoc](http://www.illinois.gov/idoc)

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## Indiana

Indiana Department of Corrections: Offender  
Records

Phone: (317) 232 - 5716

Mailing Address:  
302 W. Washington Street  
Room E - 334  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
[www.in.gov/idoc](http://www.in.gov/idoc)

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## Iowa

Iowa Department of Corrections  
Phone: (515) 725 - 5701  
Email: [Doc.information@iowa.gov](mailto:Doc.information@iowa.gov)  
[www.doc.iowa.gov/](http://www.doc.iowa.gov/)

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## Kansas

Kansas Department of Corrections  
% Public Information Officer  
714 W Jackson  
Suite 300  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

Email: [kdoc\\_pub@doc.ks.gov](mailto:kdoc_pub@doc.ks.gov)  
[www.doc.ks.gov/](http://www.doc.ks.gov/)

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## Kentucky

Kentucky Department of Corrections Contact  
Information

Commissioner's Office Phone: (502) 782 -  
2266

[www.corrections.ky.gov/](http://www.corrections.ky.gov/)

Offender Information Services Mailing  
Address:

Offender Information Services  
P.O. Box 2400  
Frankfort, KY 40602 - 2400

## Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Public Safety and  
Corrections Contact Information:  
Public Records requests should be submitted  
in writing to:  
La. Department of Public Safety and  
Corrections  
Attn: Deputy Secretary's Office  
P.O. Box 9430  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Phone: (225) 342 - 6744

Fax: (225) 342 - 3095

[www.doc.louisiana.gov/](http://www.doc.louisiana.gov/)

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## Maine

Maine State Police, State Bureau of  
Identification Public Records Request Contact  
Information:

Phone: (297) 624 - 7240

[www.maine.gov/corrections/](http://www.maine.gov/corrections/)

Mailing Address:  
State Bureau of Identification  
State House Station #42  
Augusta, ME 04333-0042

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## Maryland

Maryland Department of Public Safety and  
Correctional Services Public Records Request  
Contact information:

Address:  
Operations - Corrections  
6776 Reisterstown Road  
Baltimore, MD 21215

Phone: (410) 585 - 3300

Public Information Act Request Form may be  
found here: [https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/  
publicinfo/pdfs/PIA\\_Request-form.pdf](https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicinfo/pdfs/PIA_Request-form.pdf)

[www.news.maryland.gov/dpscs/home](http://www.news.maryland.gov/dpscs/home)

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## Massachusetts

Information on how to make public records  
requests of the Massachusetts Department of  
Corrections may be found here: [https://www.  
mass.gov/how-to/request-public-records-from-  
the-department-of-correction](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/request-public-records-from-the-department-of-correction)

Submit an online records request here: [https://  
www.mass.gov/forms/request-public-records-  
online-from-the-department-of-correction](https://www.mass.gov/forms/request-public-records-online-from-the-department-of-correction)

Phone: (410) 585 - 3300

Public Information Act Request Form may be  
found here: [https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/  
publicinfo/pdfs/PIA\\_Request-form.pdf](https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicinfo/pdfs/PIA_Request-form.pdf)

[www.news.maryland.gov/dpscs/home](http://www.news.maryland.gov/dpscs/home)

## Michigan

Michigan Department of Corrections FOIA  
Requests may be sent to:  
MDOC FOIA Coordinator email: MDOC-  
OLAFOIA@michigan.gov  
MDOC FOIA Coordinator Mailing Address:  
MDOC FOIA Coordinator  
Michigan Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 30003  
Lansing, MI 48909

Phone: (517) 373-0450

Fax: (517) 373-2558

[www.michigan.gov/corrections/](http://www.michigan.gov/corrections/)

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## Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Information may be found  
here:

[www.mn.gov/doc/](http://www.mn.gov/doc/)

<https://mn.gov/doc/contact/data-requests/>

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## Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Information:  
Main Records Office

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 24388  
Jackson, MS 39225

Phone: (601) 933 - 2889 ext. 6095 / 6011

[www.ms.gov/mdoc](http://www.ms.gov/mdoc)

Fax: (601) 973 - 3891

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## Missouri

Missouri Department of Corrections Offender  
Inquiry Contact Information:

[www.doc.mo.gov/](http://www.doc.mo.gov/)

Email: [constituentservices@doc.mo.gov](mailto:constituentservices@doc.mo.gov)

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## Montana

Montana Department of Corrections Contact  
Information:

Phone: (406) 444 - 3930

Mailing Address:

Fax: (406) 444 - 4920

Montana Department of Corrections  
5 S. Last Chance Gulch  
P.O. Box 201301  
Helena, MT 59620 - 1301

Email: [jbeck@mt.gov](mailto:jbeck@mt.gov)

[www.cor.mt.gov/](http://www.cor.mt.gov/)

## Nebraska

Nebraska Department of Corrections Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box #94661  
Lincoln, NE 68509 - 4661

Phone: (402) 471 - 2654

Nebraska Department of Corrections Reports may be found here: <https://www.corrections.nebraska.gov/public-information/statistics-reports/ndcs-reports>

[www.corrections.nebraska.gov](http://www.corrections.nebraska.gov)

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## Nevada

Nevada Department of Corrections Information:

Inmate Records and Information requests should be directed to:

Email: [info@doc.nv.gov](mailto:info@doc.nv.gov)  
Phone: (775)887-33677  
Fax: (775)887-3381, ATTN: Family & Community Services

Postal Mail:  
ATTN: Family & Community Services  
Nevada Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 7011  
Carson City, Nevada 89702

[www.doc.nv.gov/](http://www.doc.nv.gov/)

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## New Hampshire

New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women  
Department of Corrections Mailing Address:

New Hampshire Department of Corrections  
105 Pleasant Street  
P.O. Box 1806  
Concord, NH 03302-1806

Phone: (603) 271-5600

[feedback@doc.nh.gov](mailto:feedback@doc.nh.gov)

Office of Offender Records, Jay MacKey,  
Supervisor, (603) 271 - 1825

New Hampshire Department of Corrections  
Office of Public Information  
P.O. Box 1806  
Concord, NH 03302

Information requests can also be made via email to [jeffrey.lyons@doc.nh.gov](mailto:jeffrey.lyons@doc.nh.gov)

[www.nh.gov.nhdoc/](http://www.nh.gov.nhdoc/)

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## New Jersey

State of New Jersey  
Department of Corrections  
Whittlesey Road  
P.O. Box 863  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
Mercer County

Phone: (609) 292 - 4036

[www.state.nj.us/corrections/](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/)

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## New Mexico

New Mexico Corrections Department  
P.O. Box 27116  
Santa Fe, NM 87502 - 0116

For general inquiries, email: [NMCD-Inquires@state.nm.us](mailto:NMCD-Inquires@state.nm.us)

For inmate records, call: (505) 383 - 2804

[www.cd.nm.gov](http://www.cd.nm.gov)

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## New York

New York Department of Corrections and  
Community Supervision Public Records  
Request Contact Information:

New York State Freedom of Information Law  
Request Form may be found here:  
<http://www.doccs.ny.gov/DOCCSwebfoilform.aspx>

Requests may be emailed to:  
[DOCCSFOILUnit@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:DOCCSFOILUnit@doccs.ny.gov)

Mailed to:  
FOIL Unit, Office of Counsel  
NYS Department of Corrections and  
Community Supervision  
Building 2  
1220 Washington Ave  
Albany, NY 12226 - 2050

Phone: (518) 457 - 8126

[www1.nyc.gov/site/doc/index.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doc/index.page)

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## North Carolina

North Carolina Department of Public Safety  
512 North Salisbury Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Phone: (919) 733 - 2126

[www.ncdps.gov/](http://www.ncdps.gov/)

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## North Dakota

North Dakota Department of Corrections and  
Rehabilitation  
PO Box 1898

Phone: (701) 328 - 6390

[www.nd.gov/docr/](http://www.nd.gov/docr/)

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## Ohio

Ohio Department of Corrections Contact  
Information:

Phone: (61) 387-0588

Email: [drc.publicinfo@odrc.state.oh.us](mailto:drc.publicinfo@odrc.state.oh.us)

[www.drc.ohio.gov](http://www.drc.ohio.gov)

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma Department of Corrections Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
Oklahoma Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 11400  
Oklahoma City, OK 73136-0440

Phone: (405) 425 - 2578

Fax: (405) 425 - 2578

[www.doc.ok.gov/](http://www.doc.ok.gov/)

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## Oregon

Oregon Department of Corrections Contact Information

Email: [DOC.Info@doc.state.or.us](mailto:DOC.Info@doc.state.or.us)

Phone: (503) 945 - 9090

Fax: (503) 373 - 1173

[www.oregon.gov/doc](http://www.oregon.gov/doc)

For department-wide requests, contact Nickie Basinger, Public Records & Research Coordinator at [nickie.basinger@doc.state.or.us](mailto:nickie.basinger@doc.state.or.us)

For facility specific requests, contact Vicki Reynolds at [vicki.s.reynolds@doc.state.or.us](mailto:vicki.s.reynolds@doc.state.or.us) (In charge of records at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility)

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## Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections  
Central Office Contact Information

Mailing Address:  
1920 Technology Parkway  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Central Office by Phone: (717) 728 - 2573

Email: [ra-contactdoc@pa.gov](mailto:ra-contactdoc@pa.gov)

[www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)

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## Rhode Island

Rhode Island Department of Corrections  
Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
40 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920

General Information Phone: (401) 462 - 1000

Records & ID Phone: (401) 462 - 3900

[www.doc.ri.gov](http://www.doc.ri.gov)

## South Carolina

South Carolina Department of Corrections  
Contact Information:  
Written FOIA Requests can be mailed to or  
emailed to:  
FOIA Coordinator  
Office of General Counsel  
South Carolina Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 21787  
Columbia, SC 29221 - 1787

Email: [FOIA@doc.sc.gov](mailto:FOIA@doc.sc.gov)

[www.doc.sc.gov](http://www.doc.sc.gov)

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## South Dakota

South Dakota Department of Corrections  
Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
South Dakota Department of Corrections  
% 500 E. Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Central Office Phone: (605) 773 - 3478

Central Records Phone: (605) 367 - 5190 or  
(605) 367 - 5140

[www.doc.sd.gov](http://www.doc.sd.gov)

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## Tennessee

Tennessee Department of Corrections Public  
Request Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
Tennessee Department of Corrections  
Records Management  
2nd Floor, Rachel Jackson Building  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243 - 0465

Phone: (615) 253 - 8079

Requests can also be submitted via:  
[https://tennesseedoc.govqa.us/webapp/\\_rs/  
\(S\(p33o4rj2tcizcgq1bunnxtip\)\)/support/home](https://tennesseedoc.govqa.us/webapp/_rs/(S(p33o4rj2tcizcgq1bunnxtip))/support/home).

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## Texas

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Public  
Records Request Contact Information:

Public Records Request may be sent to:  
Mailing Address:  
TDCJ - Executive Services  
P.O. Box 99  
Huntsville, TX 77342 - 0099

Email: [exec.services@tdcj.texas.gov](mailto:exec.services@tdcj.texas.gov)

Fax: (936) 437 - 2125

[www.tdcj.state.tx.us](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us)

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## Utah

Utah Department of Corrections Public  
Records Request Contact Information:

Public Records requests may be mailed or  
emailed to:

Mailing Address:  
Records Bureau  
Utah Department of Corrections  
14717 S. Minuteman Dr.  
Draper, Utah 84020

Email: Kara Kummer, Records Specialist  
kkummer@utah.gov

Government Records Access and  
Management Act Request Form:  
[https://corrections.utah.gov/images/2017-05-  
Grama-Form.pdf](https://corrections.utah.gov/images/2017-05-Grama-Form.pdf)

[www.corrections.utah.gov](http://www.corrections.utah.gov)

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## Vermont

Vermont Department of Corrections Contact  
Information:

Mailing Address:  
NOB 2 South  
280 State Drive  
Waterbury, VT 05671 - 2000  
Phone: (802) 241 - 2442  
Fax: (802) 241 - 0020  
[www.doc.state.vt.us](http://www.doc.state.vt.us)

Prisoner Support Organizations in Vermont:

Incarcerated Women - Vermont Works  
for Women: [www.vtworksforwomen.org/  
programs/women/incarcerated-women](http://www.vtworksforwomen.org/programs/women/incarcerated-women)

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## Virginia

Virginia Department of Corrections Central  
Office Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
Virginia Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 26963  
Richmond, VA 23261

Phone: (804) 674 - 3000

Email: [DOCMail@vadoc.virginia.gov](mailto:DOCMail@vadoc.virginia.gov)

[www.vadoc.virginia.gov](http://www.vadoc.virginia.gov)

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## Washington

Washington Department of Corrections Public  
Records Office Contact Information:

Mailing Address:  
Department of Corrections  
Public Records Office  
P.O. Box 41118  
Olympia, WA 98504 - 1118

Email: [DOCPublicDisclosureUnit@doc.wa.gov](mailto:DOCPublicDisclosureUnit@doc.wa.gov)

[www.doc.wa.gov](http://www.doc.wa.gov)

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## West Virginia

West Virginia Divisions of Corrections Records  
Room Contact Information:

Address:

112 California Ave, Bldg 4, Room 300  
Charleston, WV 25305

Phone: (304) 558 - 2037

Fax: (304) 558 - 5934

[www.wvdoc.com](http://www.wvdoc.com)

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## Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Corrections Public  
Records Requests Contact Information:

Email: [DOCPublicRecords@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DOCPublicRecords@wisconsin.gov)

Public Records Notice: [www.doc.wi.gov/  
Documents/AboutDOC/PublicRecordsNotice.  
pdf](http://www.doc.wi.gov/Documents/AboutDOC/PublicRecordsNotice.pdf)

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## Wyoming

Wyoming Department of Corrections Contact  
Information:

Public Information and Media Requests  
Contact

Mark Horan, Public Information Officer  
Wyoming Department of Corrections  
1934 Wyatt Drive, Suite 100  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Phone: (307) 777 - 5889

Fax: (307) 777 - 7476

Email: [mark.horan@wyo.gov](mailto:mark.horan@wyo.gov)

[www.doc.state.wy.us](http://www.doc.state.wy.us)

# APPENDIX E: ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

These are organizations that provide services to people who are currently incarcerated and may be of use to your research in determining the number of people who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual violence within their lifetimes, given their direct relationships with people who are currently incarcerated:

## **Antioch College Books to Prisoners Project (Nationwide and Regional Book Programs)**

Mailing Address:  
One Morgan Place  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387

## **Abolitionist Law Center (State Based Organization and Resources, Pennsylvania)**

Website: [www.abolitionistlawcenter.org](http://www.abolitionistlawcenter.org)  
Phone Number: 412-654-9070  
Email: [info@abolitionistlawcenter.org](mailto:info@abolitionistlawcenter.org)  
Mailing Address:  
PO Box 8654  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

## **Action Committee for Women in Prison (Nationwide Organization)**

Website: [www.acwip.wordpress.com](http://www.acwip.wordpress.com)  
Phone: 626-710-7543  
Email: [info@acwip.net](mailto:info@acwip.net)  
Mailing Address:  
769 Northwestern Drive  
Claremont, CA 91711

## **Aid to Inmate Mothers (State Based Organizations and Resources, Alabama)**

Website: [www.inmatemoms.org](http://www.inmatemoms.org)  
Phone Number: 334-262-2245  
Email: [carol@inmatemoms.org](mailto:carol@inmatemoms.org)  
Mailing Address:  
PO Box 986  
Montgomery, AL 36101-0986

## **All of Us or None (Nationwide Organization and Resources)**

Website: [www.allofusornone.org](http://www.allofusornone.org)  
Phone: 415-255-7036 x337  
Mailing Address:  
1540 Market St, Suite 490  
San Francisco, CA 94102

## **Appalachian Prison Book Project (Regional Book Programs: KY, MD, OH, TN, VA, WV)**

Website: [www.aprisonbookproject.wordpress.com](http://www.aprisonbookproject.wordpress.com)  
Email: [appalachianbp@gmail.com](mailto:appalachianbp@gmail.com)  
Mailing Address:  
PO Box 601  
Morgantown, WV 26507

**Arizona Justice Project (State Based Organization and Resource, Arizona)**

Website: [www.azjusticeproject.org](http://www.azjusticeproject.org)

Phone: 602-496-0286

Email: [info@azjusticeproject.org](mailto:info@azjusticeproject.org)

Mailing Address:

Arizona State University, MC 4420

411 N. Central Ave, Suite 600

Phoenix, AZ 85004-2139

**Athens Books to Prisoners (State Based Organization and Resource, Ohio)**

Website: [www.athensbookstoprisoners.weebly.com](http://www.athensbookstoprisoners.weebly.com)

Email Address: [athensbooks2prisoners@gmail.com](mailto:athensbooks2prisoners@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

30 1st Street

Athens, OH 45701

**Black and Pink**

Email: [members@blackandpink.org](mailto:members@blackandpink.org)

Website: [www.blackandpink.org](http://www.blackandpink.org)

**Book 'Em (State Based Organization and Resource, Pennsylvania)**

Website: [www.bookempgh.org](http://www.bookempgh.org)

Phone: 412-361-3022 ext. 4

Email: [bookempgh@gmail.com](mailto:bookempgh@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

% Thomas Merton Center

5129 Penn Ave

Pittsburgh, PA 15224

**Books Through Bars (Regional Organization and Resources, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, WV)**

Website: [www.booksthroughbars.org](http://www.booksthroughbars.org)

Phone: 215-727-8170

Email: [info@booksthroughbars.org](mailto:info@booksthroughbars.org)

Mailing Address:

4722 Baltimore Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19143

**Books to Prisoners (Nationwide and Regional Book Programs)**

Website: [www.bookstoprisoners.net](http://www.bookstoprisoners.net)

Phone: 206-527-3339

Email: [bookstoprisoners@live.com](mailto:bookstoprisoners@live.com)

Mailing Address:

**% Left Bank Books**

92 Pike St, Box A  
Seattle, WA 98101

**California Coalition for Women Prisoners (State Based Organization and Resource, CA)**

Website: [www.womeprisoners.org](http://www.womeprisoners.org)

Phone: 412-255-7036 ext. 4

Mailing Address:

4400 Market St  
Oakland, CA 94608

**California Lifer Newsletter (State Based Organization and Resource, California)**

Website: [www.lifesupportalliance.org](http://www.lifesupportalliance.org)

Phone: 916-402-3750

Email: [lifesupportalliance@gmail.com](mailto:lifesupportalliance@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 277  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

**Center on Wrongful Convictions - Women's Project (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/wrongfulconvictions/womensproject](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/wrongfulconvictions/womensproject)

Phone: 312-503-8576

Mailing Address:

Center on Wrongful Convictions,  
Northwestern University Pitzker School of Law  
375 E Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60611-3069

**Chicago Books to Women in Prison (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.chicagobwp.org](http://www.chicagobwp.org)

Email: [chicagobwp@gmail.com](mailto:chicagobwp@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

% RFUMC  
4511 N Hermitage Ave  
Chicago, IL 60640

**Critical Resistance (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)

Phone: 510-444-0484

Mailing Address:

1904 Franklin Street, Suite 504

Oakland, CA 94612

**DC Books to Prisoners (Regional Organization and Resources, All States Except: CA, CT, FL, IL, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, VT, WA & WI)**

Website: [www.dcbookstoprisoners.org](http://www.dcbookstoprisoners.org)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 34190

Washington, DC 20043

**East Bay Prisoner Support (Regional Organization & Resource, CA, AZ, NM, TX, UT, NV)**

Website: [www.eastbayprisonersupport.wordpress.com](http://www.eastbayprisonersupport.wordpress.com)

Email: [EBPS@riseup.net](mailto:EBPS@riseup.net)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 22449

Oakland, CA 94609

**Friends Outside (State Based Organization and Resource, California)**

Website: [www.friendsoutside.org](http://www.friendsoutside.org)

Phone: 209-955-0701

Email: [gnewby@friendsoutside.org](mailto:gnewby@friendsoutside.org)

Mailing Address:

7272 Murray Dr

Stockton, CA 95204

**Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners (State Based Organization and Resource, Ohio)**

Website: [www.friendsofiowawomenprisoners.org](http://www.friendsofiowawomenprisoners.org)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 71272

Clive, IA 50325

**Inside Books Project (State Based Organization and Resource, Texas)**

Website: [www.insidebooksproject.com](http://www.insidebooksproject.com), Phone: 512-655-3121

Email: [insidebooksproject@gmail.com](mailto:insidebooksproject@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

827 W 12th Street

% 12th Street Books

Austin, TX 78701

**Justice Now**

Website: [www.justicenowprisonabolition.org](http://www.justicenowprisonabolition.org)

Phone: 510-839-7654

Email Address: [diana@justicenow.org](mailto:diana@justicenow.org)

Mailing Address:

1322 Webster St, Suite 210

Oakland, CA 94612

**LGBT Books to Prisoners (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.lgbtbookstoprisoners.org](http://www.lgbtbookstoprisoners.org)

Email: [lgbtbookstoprisoners@gmail.com](mailto:lgbtbookstoprisoners@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

1202 Williamson St #1

% Social Justice Incubator

Madison, WI 53703

**Louisiana Books 2 Prisoners (Regional Organization and Resource, AL, AR, MS and LA)**

Website: [www.lab2p@org](http://www.lab2p@org)

Mailing Address:

3157 Gentilly Blvd. #141

New Orleans, LA 70122

**Midwest Books to Prisoners (Regional Organization and Resource, AR, IA, KS, MO, NE)**

Website: [www.midwestb2p.com](http://www.midwestb2p.com)

Phone: 312-842-7390

Email: [midwestbooks2prisoners@gmail.com](mailto:midwestbooks2prisoners@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

% Quimbys Bookstore

1321 N Milwaukee Ave, PMB #460

Chicago, IL 60622

**NYC Books Through Bars (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [booksthroughbarsnyc.org](http://booksthroughbarsnyc.org)

Email: [info@booksthroughbarsnyc.org](mailto:info@booksthroughbarsnyc.org)

**Prison Book Project (State Based Organization and Resource, Florida)**

Website: [www.openbookspcola.org](http://www.openbookspcola.org)

Phone: 850-453-6774

Email: [openbookspcola@riseup.net](mailto:openbookspcola@riseup.net)

Mailing Address:

% Open Books Bookstore

1040 N Guillemard St

Pensacola, FL 32501

**Prison Books Collective (State Based Organization and Resource, North Carolina)**

Website: [www.prisonbooks.info](http://www.prisonbooks.info)

Phone: 919-443-9238

Email: [prisonbooks@gmail.com](mailto:prisonbooks@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 625

Carrboro, NC 27510

**Providence Books Through Bars (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.providencebtb.org](http://www.providencebtb.org)

Phone: 401-356-0388

Email: [info@providencebtb.org](mailto:info@providencebtb.org)

Mailing Address:

42 Lenox Ave

Providence, RI 02907-1910

**Read Between the Bars (State Based Organization and Resource, Arizona)**

Website: [www.readbetweenthebars.com](http://www.readbetweenthebars.com)

Email: [readbetweenthebars@gmail.com](mailto:readbetweenthebars@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1589

% Daily Planet Publishing

Tucson, AZ 85702

**RedBird Books-to-Prisoners (State Based Organization and Resource, Ohio)**

Website: [www.redbirdprisonabolition.blogspot.com](http://www.redbirdprisonabolition.blogspot.com)

Email: [RedbirdPrisonAbolition@gmail.com](mailto:RedbirdPrisonAbolition@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 10599

Columbus, Oh 43201

**Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project (State Based Organization and Resource, California)**

Website: [www.tgijp.org](http://www.tgijp.org)

Phone: 415-554-8491

Email: [info@tgijp.org](mailto:info@tgijp.org)

Mailing Address:

370 Turk St #370

San Francisco, CA 94102

**Unchained Books (State Based Organization and Resource, Colorado)**

Website: [www.unchainedbooks.wordpress.com](http://www.unchainedbooks.wordpress.com)

Email: [unchainedbooks@riseup.net](mailto:unchainedbooks@riseup.net)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 784

Fort Collins, CO 80522

**Urbana-Champaign Books to Prisoners Project (State Based Organization and Resource, Illinois)**

Website: [www.books2prisoners.org](http://www.books2prisoners.org)

Phone: 708-782-4608

Mailing Address:

PO Box 515

Urbana, IL 61803

**Women's Prison Book Project (Nationwide Organization and Resource)**

Website: [www.wpbp.org](http://www.wpbp.org)

Phone: 612-871-7110

Mailing Address:

% Boneshaker Books

2002 23rd Ave South

Minneapolis, MN 55404

**Prison Legal News**

Website: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/>

Phone: 561-360-2523

Mailing address:

Prison Legal News

P.O. Box 1151

Lake Worth, FL 33460

**Lambda Legal**

Website: <https://www.lambdalegal.org/>

Phone: Contact the legal help desk in your state: <https://www.lambdalegal.org/helpdesk>

Mailing address:

**National Headquarters**

120 Wall Street, 19th Floor

New York, NY 10005-3919

**National Center for Transgender Equality**

Website: <https://transequality.org/>

(202) 642-4542

[ncte@transequality.org](mailto:ncte@transequality.org)

1133 19th St NW

Suite 302

Washington D.C. 20036

**Sylvia Rivera Law Project**

Website: [www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)

More resources may be found here: <https://www.prisonactivist.org/resources>

# APPENDIX F: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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